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COMMENTARY

The Outlook for a New FEPC

MALCOLM ROSS

The Faith of Henry Wallace

DAVID T. BAZELON

Should Jews Change Their Occupations?

SAMUEL H. FLOWERMAN

The Peoples of My Home Town

SOLOMON F. BLOOM

United Nations: Cultural Division

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The Study of Man—

The "Alienation" of Modern Man

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Mordecai S. Chertoff

Oscar Handlin

Milton R. Konvitz

Jacob Glatstein

William Barrett

Diana Bernstein

THE MONTH IN HISTORY

LETTERS FROM READERS

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

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Arnold W. Green

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Ecuador: Eight Years on Mount Ararat

Benno Weiser

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COMMENTARY

THE OUTLOOK FOR A NEW FEPC

The 80th Congress and Job Discrimination

MALCOLM ROSS

A YEAR has passed since the wartime Fair Employment Practice Committee ended active operations. FEPC would today be a disregarded foot-note to World War II except for the fact that racial and religious intolerance in American business and industry remains one of the important unsolved problems of peace. It remains as an anomaly in our democracy, depriving members of minorities of equality of personal opportunity, constituting a constant source of group frustration and griev-

The Republican party, which holds the majority in the 80th Congress, has pledged itself to pass a permanent FEPC law outlawing the practice of discrimination in employment. That, however, does not insure either easy, early, or sure passage of such a law. MALCOLM ROSS, who was chairman of the wartime Committee on Fair Employment Practice appointed by President Roosevelt, here discusses the problems involved in a national FEPC and the difficulties faced in its enactment. Previously, Mr. Ross had lengthy experience with labor and industrial problems, notably in his work with the American Friends Service Committee in Southern coal fields and as Director of Information for the National Labor Relations Board. Mr. Ross was born in Newark in 1895 and attended Yale University. He has written extensively for magazines and has published a number of books, including several novels, a sociological work—*Machine Age in the Hills* (1933), and a well-known autobiographical book—*Death of a Yale Man* (1939).

ance, wasting untold labor power and talent, and adding an immense burden of higher costs and lowered efficiency to the operation of our national economy.

Of course, even before the war there was awareness of the problem of prejudice in the job field. Discrimination against groups conveniently tagged for economic exploitation by their race or color or religion was an old story in America; and the decade before Germany invaded Poland saw gains beginning to be made against such discrimination. But when the war came and the Nazis based their bid for power on the ancient device of race hatred, the problem was highlighted. America was doubly motivated to resist. Industrial efficiency was vital if the war was to be fought and won. And there was the danger that Aryan race doctrine, infecting these shores, might prove a powerful divisive weapon destructive of national unity and morale.

So it was entirely logical that President Roosevelt in 1941 should announce a national policy against racial and religious discrimination. He realized Hitler's propaganda was dangerous: in our past history a flare-up of anti-Semitism has always involved Negroes, and usually Catholics. Roosevelt's open recognition of the danger is reflected in the fact that he based the anti-discrimination policy on "the firm belief that the democratic

way of life within the nation can be defended successfully only with the help and support of all groups within its borders."

THIS statement was made six months before Pearl Harbor. It accompanied an order on the War and Navy Departments and all other contracting agencies and services not to refuse employment to any defense workers because of race, color, religion, or national origin.

This committed all government and all war industry (by written contract) to a policy of equal opportunity. It is important to remember that FEPC itself, set up by this same executive order, was merely the watchdog. It could remind government services of their duty, and cite them to the President if they were derelict. It could hold public hearings to call war employers and labor unions to answer specific complaints of discrimination. But its ultimate authority went no further than the citation of offenders to the President in the hope that his prestige could persuade them to mend their ways. Technically, to be sure, the President could cancel the contract of a war plant that persisted in discrimination. This would have meant, for example, cutting off the supply of small arms ammunition desperately needed in France and the Pacific. There were no such contract cancellations. Only twice, in fact, were offenders cited to the President. One such action brought compliance, the other failed.

Inadequately staffed and unable to enforce its decisions, FEPC nevertheless became a rallying point against the calculated intolerance of the Nazis and its sporadic reflection in our own national life. Thirteen million Negroes, 3 million Mexican-Americans, and 5 million Jews intently observed this first attempt by their government to move directly against the economic disabilities placed upon them. Church groups saw in FEPC an affirmation of the dignity and worth of the individual. Most trade unions backed the principle of FEPC, realizing that racial and religious divisions weaken unity; if this is too coldly pragmatic an explanation

of the trade union position, let us add to it, in all fairness, the fact that most Americans are ashamed of being unfair to minorities and will renounce discrimination if the issue is squarely presented.

The negative side also contributed to support of the FEPC, and paradoxically helped the anti-discrimination fight by dramatizing it. The fulminations of Senators Bilbo and Eastland against Negroes exerted an enormous influence in drawing public attention to the disadvantages of being a Negro. Once spot-lighted, the issue acquired a continuing life of its own.

Nevertheless, the national FEPC fell by the wayside once the war was over. The fight to extend it into times of peace met with severe setbacks. And today we find neither the minority groups nor the churches, unions, and ordinary people who supported FEPC during the war strongly enough organized for the struggle to carry the principle of equal opportunity into public law or governmental procedure.

LAST year, when FEPC was winding up its affairs, it made a survey of how minority group workers were faring during the change-over from war industry to peacetime production. Sufficient samples were taken to show that Negroes were generally being dropped from government service, that white industrial workers were disproportionately being retained at the higher-paid jobs, that the United States Employment Service consistently referred Negro workers to low-paid jobs only.

The same period saw the reappearance of "Gentile only" help wanted advertisements—except in New York and New Jersey, where State FEPC's forbade this practice. Jewish veterans found everywhere that there were jobs open to Gentile veterans and not open to Jews. Mexican-American shipyard and aircraft war workers faced a similar situation; generally speaking, they found themselves forced back into low-paid jobs.

This rejection of entire groups would doubtless continue, and the old patterns would be fully re-established, were it not that

the weight of minority groups has begun to make itself felt in national politics.

Northern Negroes are concentrated in New York, Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and other key states where the margin between Democrats and Republicans may be swung one way or the other by their votes. Negro votes naturally tend to go to the party that seems to be the more forthright in protecting Negro rights. This explains why FEPC was officially endorsed by both parties before the Congressional election of 1946.

And this accounts for the fact that, although the basic political difficulties remain unchanged, a bill to establish a permanent FEPC will doubtless appear on the floor of Congress before the Presidential elections of 1948.

It will be recalled that in 1944 the Republican platform pledged a vigorous FEPC law, although certain members have since shied away from including sanctions to give it teeth. The Democratic platform also promised a permanent FEPC law, but, out of deference to the party's Southern wing, made no pledge of strong enforcement.

Both parties know that a considerable Jewish and Mexican-American vote is involved in the FEPC issue. But these votes make themselves felt most sharply in Congressional elections, within individual Congressional districts.

IT is the Negro question that becomes the dominant one, both because of the numbers involved and because of its sectional impact. And it is the split within the Democratic Party on the Negro that is the major political fact in the struggle on this issue, once it is nationally projected.

During the last two years of the war this split caused three rough and tumble Congressional fights—two fights on annual appropriations for FEPC and a filibuster against the Chavez Bill to establish a permanent agency. Newspaper readers could only suppose from accounts of these debates that violent tempers and passionate threats are inevitable when government intervenes in racial matters. The Southerners proclaimed

that inevitability. "Let us alone!" they cried, as they had cried for a hundred years.

This united front of the Southerners on Capitol Hill, even at the cost of party split and resulting defeat, remains a solid political factor. During the debates before the 1946 Congressional elections, the Southern Democrats knew that they stood to lose their treasured committee chairmanships if the Republicans won Senate and House majorities; yet they remained deaf to all Northern Democratic pleas to save those majorities by wooing the Northern Negro vote.

The Republican Party did capture Congress, and with it the responsibility of doing something about FEPC. Was the 1946 Negro vote important to the Republican victory? No one can be sure. The Negro vote is volatile, of the moment. Astute politicians must reckon on the possibility that it may determine who is to be the next occupant of the White House.

This bald statement of the political factors may make it appear that these are merely ward-heeler shenanigans on a national scale, merely cold-blooded bids for votes without either conviction or human emotion. That is not altogether so. The narrow political game must be played in terms of ballots, but it involves fundamental American concepts and engages the profound interest of many serious and responsible men. Yet it would be naive not to recognize that the decision on FEPC will be made by legislators who are forced to take account of many contrary pulls and tugs.

A PREVIEW of what these legislators are likely to do when FEPC next appears on the floors of Senate and House is provided by what they actually did in relation to the wartime agency.

The 1941 Executive Order establishing FEPC, and the amended order of 1943, both carefully limited the Committee's action to job discrimination. Problems of social segregation and "social equality" were avoided, and the Committee itself left them alone. The only point at which it ever touched the issue of segregation was within actual war

plants where separation of workers by race was demonstrably a barrier to recruitment of needed labor.

Nevertheless, as soon as this practical problem of manpower recruitment reached the floor of Congress, it aroused every conceivable emotion of race hatred. The Southerners returned to Reconstruction days to find a parallel for this Yankee interference. Their angry cries made it seem that Negroes were the only minority group involved.

In fairness to the South, which frankly announces its intention to maintain white supremacy, it should be said that the wartime FEPC encountered discrimination in all Northern industrial cities where Negroes sought work. The disease of prejudice is national. Within the decade, the great migration of Negroes will make the North, Middle West, and West Coast fertile fields for any Fair Employment Practice Commission that Congress may establish.

Nevertheless the South remains the breeding ground of discrimination against Negroes; and it is the South that attacks FEPC with aroused and self-righteous indignation. The North is relatively passive. The South, therefore, is the crucial factor.

To Southerners in Congress, the FEPC movement is not an attempt to provide equal opportunity for all to earn their livelihood at their top skills; it is a malign interference with Southern customs. The total effect is to distract attention from everything else about fair employment practice except its offense to Southern sensitivities. That is what Congress talked about during its debates on the wartime FEPC, and that is practically all that has seeped out to the general public.

NORTHERN Democrats, at that time looking forward to the 1946 Congressional elections, did give support to FEPC, both in public and in private. Yet at best it was a half-hearted effort. Only a few Democrats took the trouble to study the successes and failures of the wartime racial and religious experiment. Among them were Senators Chavez and Mead, and House Members

Norton, Celler, Dawson, Cannon, Powell, Ludlow, and Helen Gahagan Douglas.

All these legislators had strong political reasons for supporting FEPC, but in fact most of them were also impelled by deep personal convictions; they were not being hypocritical, as the Southerners jeeringly suggested. But their earnest concern was exceptional.

President Truman several times made personal moves to advance consideration by Congress of a permanent FEPC bill. He tried, openly and through aides, to persuade Representative Slaughter of Missouri to break the deadlock that was preventing the Norton Bill from reaching the floor of the House. His own Congressman refused him, and later was defeated for re-election by the President's specific intervention. Mr. Truman, I believe, wants this legislation. But his brief honeymoon with Congress did not include any loving-kindness on this issue.

The truth is that the Northern Democrats let the principle of equal opportunity go by default in the 79th Congress. They will do so again in the 80th unless more of them take pains to study the problem at its roots and withstand Southern oratory.

As for the Northern Republicans, they did not feel themselves called upon to show their hand on this question in the 79th Congress. They merely stood amused on the side-lines while Northern Democrats unsuccessfully tried to withstand the embattled South. FEPC was a wedge that threatened to split the Democratic party. Time enough for Republicans to study the matter when they became the party in power.

There were a few Republicans who informed themselves on FEPC and took a position for it. Senator Taft, behind the scenes and on the floor, handled his party's interest whenever decisions on FEPC arose. Senator Morse of Oregon made impassioned speeches in behalf of FEPC, while some of his colleagues looked on in disapproval at his intense emotion. In the House, Republicans La Follette of Indiana, Baldwin of New York, and Vorys of Ohio made forthright demands that Congress stop stalling on

FEPC. Both La Follette and Baldwin were refused Republican renomination, and their zeal in the FEPC debate may have had something to do with this.

Republican thinking in these matters still remains on the plane of party politics. The controversies surrounding the wartime FEPC, and the absorbing urgency of war and reconversion problems, combined to prevent any objective examination of how the experiment had worked. An FEPC "First Report" gave a full picture of its operations through 1944. Few read it. A "Final Report," prepared last spring and still due for publication, sums up the agency's five years. It might be valuable if Congressmen would spend a quiet hour reading this summation.

WHILE the 79th Congress apparently was proving that mention of prejudice creates more prejudice, FEPC had been quietly demonstrating in war plants and government offices that it could help employers and unions to remove discriminatory barriers. Not all violators ended their discrimination at FEPC's request. The bad name that Congressional debate gave the whole project encouraged many discriminating employers and unions to continue in their old habits. But there were thousands of cases all over the country in which advances were made through unpublicized negotiations between FEPC and plant managers or union officials.

The undramatized cases were perhaps the most fruitful. Two Mexican-American workers found themselves held down to menial, low-wage jobs in war plants while other workers of less experience were promoted to skilled work. They filed complaints of discrimination with FEPC, whose field representative informed their boss that refusing promotion solely because of the workers' race was against national policy. The men were promoted.

That is a typical case, and the essence of the matter. A lot of bother to put all that governmental machinery into operation merely to advance two men slightly in grade and pay? Not too much trouble, if the results are properly weighed.

The justice done to these two workers improved the morale of the entire Mexican-American community. I know, for I saw it happen. I watched these people hold their heads higher as citizens of the nation, and become a little less conscious of the daily obloquy placed on them because of their national origin. The plant, too, improved in morale. A man with prejudice in his heart is somewhat at war with himself, for he usually also has in his make-up a sense of fair play which his prejudice violates. His better instinct will have a chance to operate when he comes into personal contact with the object of his prejudice. This is a long process, not to be achieved in a day. It began in this particular plant when the few sullen workers who had objected to the Mexican-Americans' promotion discovered that they did not hate real people as strongly as they could hate an abstraction.

FEPC in its two most active years settled an average of one hundred cases each month, involving Negro and Jewish workers as well as Mexican-Americans. In many instances, the initial opening of the gates to a few Negro workers resulted in hundreds or even thousands of other Negroes being hired. If you will recall the desperate shortage of war workers, the fact that 1,500,000 Negroes and Mexican-Americans were in prime war plants at peak production will appear a valuable contribution to the winning of the war.

There was no mass discrimination against Jewish workers. The six percent of all complaints of discrimination filed with FEPC by Jews represented the isolated cases of individuals or the discriminative use by war employers of advertisements specifically barring Jewish applicants. FEPC persuasion usually settled these cases without need of a public hearing. Many of them were within government service. When government itself was the employer, the policy against discrimination was somewhat easier to uphold.

Clarity on some general considerations is also necessary if the fight is to be properly made and won.

FEPC is a fight for the economic rights of the individual, not against prejudice. No

government can move directly against prejudice. It can only remove the economic barriers that prejudice sets up. Only after that act of unquestionable justice is accomplished does the secondary effect on prejudice appear.

During the war, Negro or Mexican-American or Jewish workers were placed in plants from which they were formerly excluded by the bigotry of a few workers or executives. The government forced the plants to admit minority group workers; but the government did not force the bigots to change their opinions. Time does that. What begins as an economic problem often ends with an ethical solution.

COULD the war-time FEPC be a model for the peace-time set-up?

Several thousand cases were successfully resolved by FEPC during its five years of operations. Almost all were settled by Committee field representatives in unpublicized negotiations. When negotiations failed, then the Committee had to turn to other government agencies for help. The Committee had no real authority.

Any comparison between the techniques used to end discrimination during the war and those necessary in times of peace must certainly take into account the factors that aided the wartime effort—the need to get all workers into war plants, the patriotism that rose above prejudice, the dislike of what Hitler was doing to minority groups. These supports would be largely lacking now. Persuasion would be less effective. Reliance on and need for Government authority would be greater.

In the light of these problems, FEPC's failures during the war are as interesting as its successes.

The Southern railroads and their labor unions combined to defy an FEPC ruling that they must end an agreement made for the purpose of limiting the job opportunities of Negro railroad workers. The case was cited to the President, who appointed a three-man committee to obtain compliance with FEPC's order. The case never came out

of the hands of the three-man committee. The carriers and their unions made good their defiance. And yet the same issue, tried independently in the courts, resulted in a Supreme Court decision directing the railroads and unions to do exactly what FEPC had told them to do.

A similar instance occurred when the Boilermakers Union, refusing to accept an FEPC order, found itself bound by a decision of the Supreme Court of California, which supported FEPC's view that a union with a closed-shop contract cannot pick and choose what workers it will permit to enjoy the privilege of working in the industry.

These two cases are cited as demonstrating two truths. First, the swing of the law is against exclusiveness within unions. Second, a government sincere about a policy of non-discrimination must assert its authority and not rely solely on court interpretation in casual cases. The latter approach is too slow, and involves the problem of conflicting court decisions. Moreover, it puts the burden of litigation on private individuals.

We must make up our mind as a nation whether we favor equal opportunity to earn a livelihood, and we ought to act decisively upon our decision.

A permanent FEPC, modeled after any one of several existing administrative agencies, should, in my opinion, follow these well-tested procedures: (1) A clear definition of equal job opportunity and of the duties of employers and unions in protecting it. (2) Publication of rules and regulations under which the Commission shall operate, with provision for their approval by Congress. (3) Reliance on informal negotiation to settle cases by persuasion in the first instance. (4) Protection of due process of law through notice of hearings, the right to produce witnesses and cross-examine, a written record, and all other safeguards as formulated by Congress itself last spring in the Administrative Procedure Act. (5) No jail sentences or fines to be imposed by the agency. (6) Issuance of cease and desist orders subject to judicial review and enforce-

ment. (7) Final appeal to the Supreme Court.

Within this framework there are possible variations that would still leave an effective and workable FEPC. It could be provided, for instance, that no employer with less than 50 workers would be subject to the Act. This would remove family businesses from jurisdiction and would place the emphasis where it mainly belongs—on discrimination as an industrial problem.

COULD such a law work?

Many attempts to equalize rights have in the past had to overcome terrific initial resistance. The right of children to escape exploitation, the right to have an earned security, the right to organize and bargain collectively, the right of a manufacturer not to be cheated by a lying competitor—all of these were opposed bitterly, all are now accepted as necessary.

The right to equal economic opportunity is as fundamental as those mentioned above. An attempt to support it by law would also meet with bitter opposition, unhappily involving old sectional animosities in addition. Yet even that storm, in my opinion, would eventually be calmed by a strict limitation of the law to the industrial and government-service fields.

After all, the South is in transition. It must support large industries, both to increase its income and to employ its displaced agricultural workers. It will probably be fully organized within the decade. It needs skilled manpower, white and Negro. All these straws in Southern winds indicate the wisdom of making a start, now, in keying the Negro third of the South's labor force into its industries. Southern good sense (and the essentially kindly feelings of many Southerners towards the Negro) must in time break through the barriers still being erected by tub-thumping demagogues. This is an industrial age, in which plantation economy is dying. An FEPC (properly sold to the South) would ease the transition.

A strong law in the long run is the useful one. Less eventual pain, more eventual good,

can come from grasping this nettle firmly.

But, first of all—to repeat—it is important that the wartime experience of FEPC be better known on Capitol Hill. So far, we are still using the issue for partisan purposes—political, trade union, economic, sectional.

There are nearly a score of fair employment practice bills being drafted for the consideration of state legislatures. Would it not be better to let the matter be handled locally, on the state level? In that way regional adaptations are possible, and the all-out opposition of the South in Congress could be avoided. This is the strategy proposed by a number of sincere advocates of legislation against job discrimination.

But New York, which has a state law, is already worried that the absence of regulation in nearby industrial States will work to its own disadvantage. This certainly has happened on a smaller scale: in San Francisco, for instance, during the war, when the few non-discriminating unions received all the Negro wartime applicants whether or not they were trained for the particular skills these unions supplied.

New York is right in saying that what is fair practice in one state should be so in all. There are no economic bulkheads between states. Nor are there between regions. The South is losing its Negro manpower fast enough. Let a number of Northern states enforce equal job opportunity and the Negro migration will become a stampede. The coming industrial South will need a national FEPC. Federal action now will help Southern reason to win its long race with Southern passion.

WHAT is the outlook?

Any useful forecast of how the 80th Congress may treat the matter must be based not on our hopes but on the realities. Here is how the immediate possibilities appear to me:

The Republican leadership in Congress will probably not be in a hurry to press an FEPC against Southern opposition. The timing is likely to depend on certain political judgments of a realistic nature. Passage of

an anti-poll tax law would also affect the Negro vote. So would an anti-lynching law. Either would arouse less Southern anger than FEPC. Both, therefore, may have priority over FEPC on the Republican calendar. Again, the enactment of a fair employment measure this spring would present two hazards. A weak law would prove itself unsatisfactory by November 1948, and the expected gratitude of Negro voters might not be forthcoming. A strong law would provoke the South and create some disunity among the Republicans themselves.

Rather than take these risks, the Republican Congress is likely to schedule FEPC hearings for this spring in the House Labor Committee and the Senate Committee on Education and Labor. The Chairman of the latter Committee, Senator Taft, is Republican strategist on FEPC. He is distinctly interested in seeing that the law (in some form) is passed by a Republican Congress. It was Taft who moved cloture to shut off a filibuster against an FEPC appropriation. He is just as certain to do so in behalf of a peacetime FEPC, if that becomes necessary to override Southern opposition. In my opinion, it will certainly be necessary.

The Southerners will rebel, attempt horse-trading in the cloakrooms, orate on the floors of House and Senate until they fall in their tracks or are silenced by cloture. Opposition of that kind creates the atmosphere of compromise. The Republicans might come out of the fracas with a law so emasculated as to satisfy no one.

ONE test of Republican sincerity will be whether or not the hearings on the law are so conducted as to bring out the grass roots problem through the testimony of those who actually live with it—officials of unions who are trying to end discrimination in their own locals, employers who have made the attempt to hire without regard to race or religion, minority-group workers who can tell what it feels like to have one's energy, skill, and ambition scornfully rejected.

Another test of Republican sincerity will

be the kind of bill that the party leaders choose to push. A purely educational measure is a tempting thing. It would avoid controversy by creating none. But the wartime cases in which FEPC failed to get compliance were those in which its authority was challenged by those who knew that the agency possessed no final powers of enforcement. To be sure, the employers and unions who defied the wartime FEPC were comparatively few in number. Simple persuasion was enough to settle the vast majority of cases. But the existence of a few powerful recalcitrants can create an atmosphere of scorn for authority which in time will destroy the agency's persuasive powers. The relatively few violators should be forced to obey the law in order that the hand of the willing majority may be upheld.

Pass a weak FEPC law with no authority for enforcement, and the next logical move would be to pick a set of weak commissioners. No one worth his salt would want the job of relying on mere talk to end industrial discrimination. It is a case-by-case job, and the tough cases simply will not yield unless the recalcitrants know that the government has final authority. At best, even a strong law will require years of litigation in the lower courts before its limits can be defined by the Supreme Court.

Some scattered violence would doubtless occur if a strong FEPC law were put into operation. That risk must be accepted as part of the price for attacking the national menace of race prejudice where it can be attacked most fruitfully—in the field of industry. Mines, mills, factories, and offices are better and quicker fields for practical solutions than schools and churches. Education and moral fervor are essential to success. But they are not enough in themselves. The working life of the nation is the ultimate, decisive arena. Let us face up to the struggle on the battleground where in the end it will have to be waged and won.

The next few years can set a new pattern of unity for decades to come. They can also let us slip back into inaction and the bad practices of the past. Congress is the key.

THE FAITH OF HENRY WALLACE

The Populist Tradition in the Atomic Age

DAVID T. BAZELON

HENRY A. WALLACE is the "uncommon man" whom many liberals propose as leader of the well-known Common Man, whose century is supposed to be the present one.

This is the culmination of a development that began in 1940 when Roosevelt forced Wallace on the Democratic nominating convention as vice-presidential candidate, to stand as a symbol of liberalism in his administration. During the war, Wallace relieved the President of much of the task of interpreting the conflict from a progressive viewpoint. In 1944 the left wing of the Democratic party and the Political Action Committee fought to have Wallace retained as their advocate in the government and first in the line of succession. The Democratic progressives lost in a close fight, chiefly for lack of Roosevelt's support. When, after Roosevelt's death, Wallace's time came to break with the Truman administration, he became the symbol of the New Deal exodus from Washington.

Wallace has now become editor of the *New Republic*, which has embarked on an ambitious program of expansion: "I want it [the *New Republic*] to be so simple that

high school students can understand it and so sound that doctors of philosophy respect it." Whether or not this miracle materializes, the new *New Republic* under Wallace is certain to become the center of liberal program-hatching in the post-Roosevelt period, at least for a time. "We need to rethink the whole basis of progressive political action," says Max Lerner, one of Wallace's ardent admirers. "If we fail in doing that, the next major depression may lead to a fascist era rather than to another New Deal."

This being the present importance of Henry Wallace, it is well to ask: What manner of man is he? What are the forces that produced him? What are his ideas?

The special strain of American liberalism that nurtured Wallace is not hard to identify. He is Midwestern; for most of his life he was purely a farm leader; religious ideas play a very large role in his political thinking. Just as Frances Perkins was the most successful social worker in the nation, so Wallace is the blue-ribbon product of the prairie land-grant colleges and of the great American populist tradition.

I

THE Wallace family settled in Pennsylvania in 1823, coming from Scotland and Ulster. They had been mostly farmers as far back as anyone could remember. Henry A.'s grandfather, also named Henry, came out to Iowa and became a very important figure in the state, being known affectionately as "Uncle Henry." He built up the family's land-holdings and founded *Wallace's Farmer*. The motto on the masthead of this family newspaper has always been "Good Farming . . . Clear Thinking . . . Right Living."

"Uncle Henry" was for the first part of his life an ordained minister of the Presby-

IN MANY quarters, Henry A. Wallace is regarded as the most important political leader and ideologist that American liberals possess, and the possible head of a movement of resurgent progressivism. DAVID T. BAZELON here attempts perhaps the first serious summary and analysis of Wallace's ideas, and of the factors of personality, family background, and regional history that may help to explain them. Mr. Bazelon has written on politics, history, and literature for the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, *Politics*, and *Partisan Review*. He was born in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1923, grew up in Milwaukee and Chicago, and attended the Universities of Illinois, Virginia, and Chicago.

terian faith. In 1877 he left the Church in a huff, railing against "church-made sins." His reason for de-institutionalizing himself appears to have been a desire to preach more freely and effectively, and to larger audiences. He did just that. "Uncle Henry's" rhetorical style was original and richly personal. His preaching never consisted of mere hell-fire, but always had a practical, educative emphasis. At the same time, he became a political power in Iowa, taking a leading part in the fight for soil conservation, against freight-rate discriminations, and in other progressive struggles of his day. He served on Teddy Roosevelt's Country Life Commission, one of the earliest governmental projects for improving the lot of farmers.

Henry Cantwell Wallace (Henry A.'s father) lacked "Uncle Henry's" vivid personal qualities, but was a very capable and successful continuator of the family tradition. One writer describes him succinctly: "As a citizen his three interests were the Y.M.C.A., the United Presbyterian Church, and the Republican Party." Henry C. spent a number of years as professor of dairying at Ames College. He later became permanent secretary of the Corn Belt Meat Producers Association. And under his management, *Wallace's Farmer* so prospered during the First World War as to earn the nickname, "Wallace's Gold Mine."

Henry C. served as Secretary of Agriculture in the cabinets of Harding and Coolidge, dying in office in 1924. The chief incident of his tenure was a long, bitter struggle with Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce. The source of their conflict was the fact that farmers were suffering, despite the industrial boom, from the high tariffs of the period and the loss of wartime markets. Throughout the 20's, the farm interests conducted a huge propaganda campaign for some form of state aid in solving the farm problem—a campaign that was instrumental in bringing about the present system of parity payments. Hoover, on the side of the industrial and financial interests then supreme, was opposed to any really significant intervention in the farm market.

Some form of state planning and control has been an absolute necessity for American farmers since the beginning of the 20's. Only during the war can agriculture now survive in a free market. It was under the influence of this overwhelming fact that Henry A. Wallace's economic thinking matured. And his father's bitter fight with Hoover was one of the reasons he threw his support to Roosevelt in 1932, but he had already switched parties four years earlier.

HENRY A. WALLACE was influenced profoundly by his grandfather. Indeed, never in his career has he abandoned the essential values of his family background and tradition; he has attempted, rather, to adapt them to modern problems and raise them to a world level. And the simple fact is that Wallace has perhaps done as much with this tradition as could be done. His father once said to the family: "Our Henry has the best mind of any Wallace in six generations."

Even before his graduation from Ames in 1910, he was writing for the family paper about his experiments in corn-breeding, which he began while still an adolescent. From 1910 until he entered Roosevelt's cabinet in 1933, he filled editorial positions on *Wallace's Farmer*. At the same time, he continued his researches in plant genetics—which eventually led him into business. His very active intellectual life and his friendships were centered around "agricultural-college people," the kind who for the past seventy-five years have had a deep influence on all aspects of farm life in this country and, through that, on our national existence.

Though Wallace's mentality was formed by his background, his interests have not been provincial. He mentions studying Bergson's *Creative Evolution* with his grandfather, he admires Veblen greatly—many more examples could be adduced. But even more important in his intellectual development has been the persistent devotion to religious beliefs and the curious pattern established by the unresolved conflict of this religious emphasis with his broader culture.

While still young, Wallace tells us, he

began to reflect on the sermons he heard in church; he found them somewhat lacking in logic. This naturally caused an inner conflict, which he disposed of by deciding that a critical attitude in church was improper. He stopped attending services and began a study of Darwinism, but the more he read, the stronger became his feeling of the need for a God "immanent as well as transcendent." (He accepted the theory of evolution, of course.) Wallace calls Veblen "a modern Isaiah," but he also says: "I think there is far more possibility of good in the American businessman than Veblen cared to admit." Darwinism is true, Veblen's thought is true, but—their opposites are also true!

Wallace has told us that the book that influenced him most (after the Bible, presumably) was *Revolutions of Civilization* (1911) by W. M. Flinders Petrie, the British Egyptologist. A slim volume, it presents a very simple thesis on historical cycles, maintaining that every civilization has developed and decayed in the course of 1500 years. Petrie's thesis was derived from a study of works of art, especially sculpture, in Egypt and Europe. The abandonment of archaic forms being his only criterion of growth, Petrie demonstrates the existence of cycles rather convincingly. He also describes the typical stages in the development of a civilization: the sequence is, roughly, from the flowering of the fine arts to scientific creativity and, finally, the accumulation of wealth. At the end of a cycle the old, decayed forms remain dormant until revived by barbaric forces: "the source of every civilization has lain in race mixture. . . ."

The point of Petrie's book, Wallace believes, "is that democracy by destroying capitalism eventually destroys itself." This is quite an unexpected pronouncement, coming from a liberal leader whose program presumably espouses democracy at the expense of capitalism. But Wallace apparently sees basic economic democracy as historically unfeasible. Essentially, Petrie holds a racist or national view of history, not seeing class structure as dynamic, and Wallace seems to share this view with him. The Egyptologist's

proposal for overcoming the elemental cycles of history was to create a biologically superior group to serve as rulers and preservers of culture.

IN HIS first two years as Secretary of Agriculture, Wallace wrote speeches, articles, and books at a tremendous rate. After 1934, however, his rate of production dropped considerably, though he has always remained comparatively prolific. He has published about a dozen volumes in all, including collections of speeches. Except for several technical books and one or two dealing chiefly with religion, his writings are largely devoted to detailed economic analysis and suggestions for economic planning. Most of this literary production was occasioned by contemporary issues—such as early New Deal planning, the question of the Constitution and the Supreme Court, the economics of the war, and so forth.

Judging from his record in the Roosevelt-Truman span, some government people consider Wallace a good administrator, while others assert that his departments were poorly run because he lacked good sense in selecting personnel. He is generally thought to have shown ineptitude in choosing his political advisers. And, contrary to common opinion, many Washington liberals criticize Wallace strongly for what they consider his toadying to business groups. In the course of his office-holding career, Wallace made a reputation for himself as a mystic. There are tales about séances and his interest in yoga. (On his trip to China in 1944, he showed less curiosity about politics than about Buddhism.) In Washington one hears the ominous words—"the Republicans are sitting on a pile of stuff about Henry. . . ."

The change Wallace underwent in office was profound. Let me quote two disparate observations by Russell Lord (who has edited two collections of Wallace's speeches and who claims objectivity in his judgment of the liberal leader). First: when Wallace took office in 1933, he "visibly gained each day in poise, assurance and health." Second: after the first Wallace-Jones dispute, and

Roosevelt's rebuke to both, the conservative papers began to count Wallace as dead politically, while liberals were dubbing him a hero and a martyr. Lord remarks, "He seemed more relaxed and tranquil than he had been for years." Wallace, apparently, enjoys receiving power and enjoys losing it. The first exhilarates him and the second relieves him. He has never really conquered the complex problem of his relation to power.

II

WALLACE doesn't drink, smoke, tell off-color stories, swear, or play cards. He is a very early riser and a very hard worker. In Washington he often worked in his garden before going to his office in the morning. He is also an "exercise-bug." This aspect of his personality is rather well known—through his newsworthy practice with a boomerang in Washington parks. (It is typical of him that he was not content simply with exercising but also made a study of the theory and history of boomerang-throwing, and on the basis of this research had a special boomerang made.) There are anecdotes about Wallace which reveal him as the kind of person who gets mental satisfaction from submitting himself to gratuitous tests of physical endurance, while other stories indicate that he is quite insensible to the point of view of people who enjoy such pleasures as drinking.

About a year ago at a fair-sized outdoor meeting in Washington, which was being broadcast with Wallace acting as master of ceremonies, this writer had a chance to see him at close range. In the course of the meeting, he introduced perhaps seven or eight speakers and made a speech himself. His voice was warm, familiar, very rich in human qualities, emotional yet well modulated—whenever he spoke into the microphone. But his expression remained rigid, held-in, unresponsive. As speakers passed him going to and from the microphone he lowered his eyes. The impression one received was of an individual lacking any direct, spontaneous relation to the human beings around him. The contrast between this

and the qualities of his speaking voice was startling.

This fleeting impression of Wallace is borne out by a much closer observer, and one, moreover, who believes him to be the hope of the nation. Frank Kingdon, liberal commentator and preacher, published a loving study in 1945 called *An Uncommon Man: Henry Wallace and Sixty Million Jobs*. Dr. Kingdon describes Wallace as being incapable of small talk; he habitually and characteristically forces conversations around to intellectual topics. This happens to be true of many intellectuals of a certain type—and one wonders what happens when such an intellectual in government comes up against, say, a "normal" politician.

Dr. Kingdon gives us a striking picture of Wallace facing the Senate Finance Committee at the time of his nomination as Secretary of Commerce. Jesse Jones, fresh from a Roosevelt booting, had to answer questions about his tenure in the Commerce and lending-agency posts. He talked to the Committee members easily and with great rapport. Except for Senator Pepper, they sympathized with Jones; all the world knew they were out to "get" Wallace. Yet all Wallace did in rebuttal was present his progressive planning thesis "straight," hoping for understanding. He took a pretty bad polemical drubbing, coming out of the conference room with little more than the personal knowledge that he was "right." And this despite Senator Pepper's eager leading questions in his behalf.

Dr. Kingdon talks about Wallace's sincerity and "natural shyness." "But 'shyness' in a public figure of mature age—in a situation of political rough-and-tumble—is a serious incapacity. When, in debate, the flow of Wallace's analytical thought is interrupted by a sharp jab, illogical or insignificant from his view, but expressing the gulf in understanding that exists between him and his adversary, he becomes confused and helpless and can only laugh embarrassedly. His enemies say he giggles.

When one contrasts Wallace's clumsiness in personal relations with his vigorous physical regimen, and with the energetic compe-

tence he exhibited in carrying out Roosevelt's policies, one is forced to conclude that he is capable of a creative relation only to his own opinions and power, not to those of other human beings. He seems unable to cope with personal power stemming from others. He often submits to it. More frequently, perhaps, and certainly with more unfortunate consequences, he ignores it.

WALLACE is better with tools and with things. He is an excellent technician. When he came to Washington he was a very poor speaker. He became expert at speaking, just as he had at throwing the boomerang. He learns foreign languages well. When he was only seventeen years old he began a series of corn-breeding experiments, based on the theoretical work of some Harvard geneticists, that resulted in the creation of a whole new corn-seed industry. He even published a book, *Corn and Corn Growing*. Writing as market analyst for *Wallace's Farmer*, he became a statistician of ability: on the basis of his analyses he predicted, as early as 1919, a postwar economic collapse. Two books resulted from this technical interest of his: *Agricultural Prices and Correlation and Machine Calculation*. Now that we are "entering the air age" he has learned to fly a plane. In terms of technique he adapts himself very well to the world.

But he is aware that such adaptation cannot satisfy the whole man. *Where technique does not suffice, Wallace fills in with religion*. Nothing is more deeply characteristic of the man than this dual pattern. Yet the very terms in which this duality is posed seem to preclude its resolution. Wallace's self-reliance, his sense of power, proceeds from his technical capacity; his moral nature—the hope he has of fulfillment for the whole man—derives from religious feeling. He has been unable to bring these two points of view together in any rational framework (in truth, his experience has forced them farther and farther apart). He is unable to unite power with right. For that he looks to a Superior Power. This attitude happens to be typical of the whole strain of American mentality

that Wallace represents. There is a huge intellectual area in this country that is amoral—characteristically, more by default than by specific intention.

III

HENRY WALLACE is, I have suggested, the supreme political expression of populism in contemporary American life. This tradition was certainly one of the most important indigenous strains in the life of this country, and one of the best. Culturally, it is not equal to what Poe or Emerson represents, but neither does it lean so heavily on European sources.

Populism was the progressive culture of the small proprietor, the independent farmer. It can almost be said that the United States has had three histories—that of the South's plantation economy, that of Northern commerce and industry, and that of the populism of the West, the ever-receding West. The Western farmers in the Republican coalition, the Homestead Act, trust-busting, Bryan—these are some of the populist peaks in American history. Until Debs and the I.W.W., and apart from the North-South conflict, populism was the class struggle in the United States.

The great American frontier had two voices—a raucous, lusty, land-hungry shriek, and the sharp, hell-fire preaching of industrious Protestants. Populism must be explained in terms of the frontier. But when the land was finally settled, only religion remained to populism.

For Wallace, populism is not primarily a social movement: it is a family heritage. The Wallaces, as newspaper-owners, have always been important intellectual leaders in the Midwest farming community. And the career of populism, in the struggles with other power groups in America, is mirrored in the careers and personalities of all three Henry Wallaces. "Uncle Henry" represents the early enthusiasm and force of the movement, before the closing of the frontier made itself felt. Henry C. Wallace stands for the consolidation of ground already won, and the awareness of the impasse reached by the

farmers in their alliance with Eastern industrial forces inside the Republican party.

Henry A. Wallace came on the scene to uphold the populist tradition in its period of crisis and decline. *His thought, personality, and program mirror the contradictions resulting from the attempt to adapt the populist tradition to the necessities of modern leadership.* Like labor's, the political strength of the small proprietor was split and weakened by the irrationalities of the two-party system in America. In his change of party allegiance during the 20's, Wallace reflected this conflict. The farm interests in this country achieved their objective when, under Roosevelt, the system of parity payments was established. But by this very fact they became incapable from then on of offering progressive leadership to our time. They had been fulfilled, made equal; the need that drives toward leadership was gone. During the Roosevelt period it was made quite clear that it was labor that stood at the head of modern progressivism.

The mentality of populism has always been religious. Religious on the one hand—and yet very practical on the other. Wallace's own grandfather is an excellent example of this combination. Bryan's rhetoric is another: the great populist leader clothed the debtor's cry for cheap money in phrases of ringing religiosity. In the largest terms, the difference between scientific and religious definitions lies in the nature of their explicitness and exactness. The effect of scientific exactness is, obviously, to expand human power over events. Wallace is scientific as to the techniques of manipulating things, but he is religious and abstract in relation to human beings. This may in part be a reflection of the fact that the farmer deals with tools rather than with persons (he has no serious labor problem) and therefore comes to consider his most important practical problems to be technological rather than social. He tends to underestimate the difficulties of social relations and to see the source of human troubles in nature—thus, ultimately, in God, since the farmer accepts nature as *given*.

Wallace's technological outlook is expressed by what is almost an obsession with the possibilities of material abundance. The largest part of his writings is devoted to analysis of these possibilities.

If only industrial technology is allowed to expand, all other problems will automatically and mechanically solve themselves—this seems to be the key to Wallace's political faith. But on the contrary, it is quite *probable* that without the prior solution of certain socio-political problems, technology will destroy rather than fulfill us. Wallace, however, faces *these* problems, which are the *human* ones, with primitive intellectual tools (a position, incidentally, that he tries to justify in emotional terms: in 1934 he said "we need a 'heart trust' even more than we need a 'brain trust'").

THE complexity of modern existence demands, above all else, exactness in the description of *human relations*. It is precisely here that Wallace's populist-religious tradition proves itself lacking. And as a political consequence, in part, of his belief in an inscrutable God, Wallace's relation to the power of *others* must always be uncreative and passive. See him delivering that famous Madison Square Garden speech which led to Truman's request for his resignation from the Cabinet. A Communist audience, dominated by pro-Russian sentiments, began to hiss and boo at the very first of his loving rebukes to the Soviet Union. Wallace proceeded to execute some on-the-spot editorial deletions, which included eliminating such remarks as: "The Russians should stop conniving against us in certain areas of the world." He had instinctively surrendered to the *others*. And at the close of the unedifying Baruch episode, in which Wallace agreed to retract his criticism of the Baruch atom plan and then reneged on this agreement, he is quoted as saying: "My friends would not let me eat crow." Here again, he had surrendered to the *others*. Wallace's political strength, we must remember, is grounded in his role as hero of the Stalinist-influenced liberal.

BEING irrevocably committed to the declining populist tradition and knowing that the efficacy of populism depended on the existence of the frontier, he now talks of "moral frontiers." But this implies that the old frontier movement was *not* "moral"—an obvious falsehood. Every social movement has its own object, and its own morality. Actually, Wallace is trying to salvage the morality of populism for historical tasks of which populism never dreamed and to which it is woefully inadequate.

Wallace's free-trade policy in economics is a clear example of his devious way with the essential meaning of populism. Like most liberals during the 30's, he began, more or less consciously, to advocate the Keynesian program for a controlled economy. A controlled capitalist economy in a democratic country must answer two major questions: how to insure capital investment, and how to maintain wage levels and not conscript labor. High wages cut into profits, and without a high profit return the capitalist simply will not make risky investments. Without going into the economic details, it can be said that, fundamentally, there is only one capitalist resolution of this primary conflict: imperialism—exploitation of foreign markets through overlordship of other peoples. Imperialism is called "free trade" by liberals. In actual fact it is not, and cannot be, any more "free" than the conditions of labor in the colonies and dominated countries with which trade is being carried on.

Wallace is a free-trader of old. But he came to it by another path than did the usual sophisticated liberal. And therein lies our tale. The Iowan began his espousal of free trade as part of a *farm* program. The farmer is forced to sell in a free market and buy in one protected by tariffs—Wallace tells us he realized this "quite early in life." But it should be easy to see that free trade for the farmer is something very different from free trade as imperialism. This first is in the genuine interest of the small proprietor and is the stuff of the traditional populist program in the United States. The second is a dangerous diversion of the progressive aims and

program of farmers and labor, leading to the ever-increasing power of international cartels—and to war.

Though he advocates free trade in moral terms, Wallace's morality actually justifies imperialism at the same time—which is typical of what happens when an old morality is applied to a new and inappropriate situation. The contradiction here results from Wallace's inability either to abandon the populist tradition or to ignore—or to solve progressively—distinctly modern problems. Clinging to a particular morality and yet unaware of the immoral consequences of the application of that morality in the contemporary world, Wallace has become a *non-functioning* moral symbol for the progressive struggle of this day. Actually, as a personality, he is in no sense a fighter for human betterment in a world of realities. Rather he represents the final reduction of the religious man. (If one asks what I mean by the reduction of the religious man, let him remember with what indulgence the more self-conscious neo-Catholics and neo-Anglicans of Europe looked upon fascism in its earlier stages.)

IV

THE illusions imbedded in Wallace's thought divide neatly under the same two headings of technological and religious.

To illustrate the former, there is his recent book on Russia, *Soviet Asia Mission*, a report of his fifty-day air journey through Siberia in 1944.

One doubts whether Wallace's credulity and lack of perception have ever been equaled by another foreign observer in Russia. One could go on endlessly citing the details of his gross distortion of the Soviet picture. I will merely outline his perspective of the Siberian frontier.

Throughout his book, Wallace constantly draws irrelevant parallels between Soviet Asia and America's West. This rhetorical device softens the reader up for a very important and quite unfounded generalization: "There exist no other two countries more alike than the Soviet Union and the United States of America." The reason: both Amer-

ica and Russia have had frontiers. From this it follows that "Men born in wide, free spaces will not brook injustice and slavery. They will not even temporarily live in slavery." These words were uttered in a speech at Irkutsk.

David J. Dallin, a liberal anti-Stalin expert on Russia, comments: "It so happens that the recently emerged industry of this region [Irkutsk] has been built and is being operated largely by the manpower of the labor-camps of Eastern Siberia." In other words, the great Siberian "frontier" rests on forced labor and penal sentences—quite unlike the old American one. Thus, in his view of the Siberian frontier, Wallace either ignores or terribly distorts the significant human, political factors. However, he reports on the machines, and especially the vegetation, in great detail.

Toward the end of *Soviet Asia Mission*, Wallace remarks that America is now in the position that England occupied at the close of the Napoleonic era. And he justifies England's 19th-century imperialism by the fact that it raised standards of living. This kind of reasoning is totally consonant with a justification of the Soviet police state—if it raises standards of living, which it is likely to do after starving its subjects for a few generations. In other words, technological progress equals progress. (A corollary of this is the notion that nationalization of means of production and wealth is *per se* socialism.) By this criterion any imperialism, any exploitation, can be whitewashed morally.

All this gives us a hint of the real meaning of many liberals' present policy of rapprochement with Russia (workable, however, only if Soviet expansionism were voluntarily abandoned). The Soviets are to be allowed to exploit most of Asia and Eastern Europe in peace, while the Anglo-American powers retain the security of capital markets in the rest of the world—with the sole purpose of raising standards of living, of course. Wallace, the ideologist supreme of Soviet-American rapprochement, sees great possibilities of creating mutual understanding between the two power-blocs by trade. He reports

that the Russian masses are very fond of American consumer-goods. The formula: Anglo-American imperialism plus Russian exploitation equals Progress.

WALLACE's religious illusions, on the other hand, are illustrated in *Statesmanship and Religion* (1934), where he devotes most of his attention to religion. Here he discusses the Catholic theocracy of the 12th and 13th centuries and its effort to realize God's will on earth by subordinating economics to religion—by fixing just prices, fair wages, etc. Wallace says he wants to do this today "on a more vast and more just scale." But—"Perhaps the times will have to be even more difficult than they have been during the past two years before the hearts of our people will have been moved sufficiently so they will be willing to join together in a modern adaptation of the theocracy of old."

In another connection, Wallace quoted with approval a Papal encyclical about cooperation between classes, "reasonable" wages and profits, society as an organism, and so on. Most intelligent people today understand that behind such innocent-sounding phrases lies an extremely dangerous concept of clerical fascism. But Wallace, because of the very vagueness of his religiosity and his almost calculated failure to discern the real factors of power, overlooks the elements of authoritarianism, not only in papal theocracy, but in his own program as well.

But it is in his notion of "unity" that he becomes consistently, if unconsciously, totalitarian in his thinking. "Unity" is absolutely required, he believes—but it can only be maintained by "an effective social discipline." This could easily mean that capitalists must be capitalists even at 3 per cent per annum and that workers must be satisfied with "jobs" and not demand wage raises. Yet Wallace believes "unity" to be possible in a real and lasting way precisely in a class society. He defines economic democracy—in one place—as equal bargaining power for business, agriculture, and labor.

Notice, first, that such equality would

satisfy only agriculture: for equal bargaining power is as much as the small-farm proprietor can ever hope to attain. On the other hand, equal bargaining power for all classes in our present industrial society could only mean a stalemate, out of which the state would arise transcendently powerful and independent, as under totalitarian regimes.

Implicit in Wallace's thinking is the belief that equilibrium signifies the absence of conflict. But conflict is not an unfortunate interlude or interruption in human history—it is the very stuff of it. Only repression can give Mr. Wallace the equilibrium of his "democratic unity."

Connected with this pernicious "unity" is Wallace's concept of the "common man." It directly follows from Wallace's terms that men must *become* "common," if they are not already so, before they can be united. That is, if in themselves or their conditions of life they happen to have distinguishing characteristics, these must be ignored for political purposes (and, with the mechanization of culture, eventually for *all* purposes—including the vision of self). As far as one can determine, Wallace's common man is simply *homo sapiens*, to be given a bottle of milk, and already "on the march" in a kind of revolutionary way. The "common man," moreover, is to be considered only as a consumer in industrial society—not even as producer, which role is infinitely more significant.

In the end, if men actually come to see themselves as common, society will contain not men at all, but just so many parts of the total supply of refrigerators, potatoes, newspapers, and movie seats. Men will not consume in order to live, but rather their lives will consist solely of what they consume. (Perhaps the common man is no more than the imperialist market atomized into units of consumption.) Now, to be a mere consumer demands nothing of the *person*—he is given things, his role is passive. If you are without fault, if you are common—you will be given what you need to exist, including a "job." The notion of the common man can be summed up: become like everybody

else, become nothing. This is a long way from the Western concept of the citizen. One wonders what grandfather "Uncle Henry" would have made of Henry III's creature.

To finish, if this dearly loved phrase of Wallace's is a figure of speech rather than a concept, then it is merely a dangerous substitute for analysis. And in our time, mystical political formulations tend to lead to totalitarianism.

V

TO ARRIVE at a full understanding of the historical meaning of Henry Wallace's psychological pattern, it may be useful to relate it explicitly to the pervasive modern problem of alienation. Especially since his religiosity, which has spread through his mind like ink on cloth, is above all else a means of wishing the problem of alienation out of existence.

When Wallace switched from the Republican to the Democratic party, he also changed his denomination, becoming an Episcopalian. He made both moves, he says, because he was "against barriers"—against Republican protectionism, and against the anti-Catholic slander directed at Al Smith in 1928. "The world is a neighborhood," Wallace insists repeatedly. Russell Lord, biographer of the Wallaces, once asserted that all of Henry A.'s career could be explained as an attempt to overcome barriers.*

* But not in his recently published study of the three Henry Wallaces (*The Wallaces of Iowa*. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin, 1947. 615 pp. \$5.00). This thick, heavily factual volume contains anything and everything concerning the Wallaces—except genuine analysis. However, what it lacks in historical understanding it more than makes up for in pure love. In a deceptively mild way, it justifies Henry A. Wallace's every act on earth, from the way he ties his shoes to his ultimate place in our history.

The wealth of misinterpreted and uninterpreted facts in this first full-length study of Wallace became available to this writer only after the present article was completed. A slight note may therefore be in order: "Uncle Henry" became quite a well-to-do farmer and his politics, consequently, consisted more of an effort to dignify farming than to advance the purposes of radical populism. As a matter of fact, he began to attack soft-money ad-

Good enough—but the whole point, of course, is *how* barriers are to be overcome. Wallace does quite well at knocking down the barriers between himself and *things*, but, to reiterate, he is classically unsuccessful in accomplishing this with *persons*. The reasons, as I have suggested, are to be found partly in his farm background. "When I was a boy working in the garden I studied plants as individuals and had a definite affection for them," he tells us. The psychological value of investing non-human objects with affection is that the individual thus achieves a sense of unity with the outside world *and*, at one and the same time, a feeling of his own power—and alienation is overcome.

"We shall never have again a religion of the whole man until there is opportunity for the great bulk of mankind once more to come into a loving relationship with things." This is perhaps the most revealing statement Wallace ever made. The question it naturally provokes in one's mind is: Why "a *loving* relationship with *things*"? The really imperative achievement is for man to gain *control* over things, especially the objects of his own creation, from which commodity-production has alienated him. If anything, men should reestablish a loving relation to other *human beings*. What is the advantage in confusing love and power as Wallace does? Only this, that if by loving things we could gain power over them, we would never be insecure. Anxiety would be banished. But life holds no greater illusion.

VI

WHAT can be said about the future of Henry Wallace? What is the political meaning of his present ascendancy among liberals?

vocates as early as 1878; and opposed Bryan in 1896. The Wallace relation to populism never included an allegiance to the Populist or Greenback parties. It was, rather, an involvement in populism as a general movement and as the culture of farmers growing out of certain historical conditions, especially the rise of capitalism. In other words, the Wallaces, were, to some extent, *aristocrats* of the farming community. This factor requires an emphasis I was not able to give it.

There can be no doubt that he is the chief inheritor of the New Deal-Roosevelt halo. Nor is there any question of the fact that all liberal groups today are crowding around the Roosevelt tradition, to keep themselves warm in its afterglow. As long as this situation continues, even Wallace's enemies cannot dispense with him.

But it should be remembered that the New Deal was composed less of an ideology than of a master politician. We must also keep in mind that if it had not been for the coming of war, even Roosevelt's great talents would have been insufficient to hold his broad and exceedingly heterogeneous coalition together. Nor is it likely that the approaching economic crisis will be a simple repetition of the last one, especially in its political effects. Apart from its freshness and enthusiasm, the essence of the New Deal, after all, was simply public spending. The Republicans would be mad indeed to allow Hoover's gross blunders to be repeated in case the coming deflation catches them in office. One can presume they have learned a lesson; this time, they will certainly accommodate themselves to the popular demand for "pump-priming."

If this much of the New Deal thunder can be stolen, and if the growing progressive wing of the Republican party has any significance, then the post-New Dealers will be forced, in self-defense, to deepen and expand the definitions of their program. But this will take them farther away from the Roosevelt precedent and, therefore, from the place where Wallace now stands. Is he capable of riding along?

It may be helpful in answering this question to glance at Wallace's pronouncements as editor of the *New Republic*. In his first editorial—"Jobs, Peace, Freedom" (December 16)—he surveyed the general situation and called for "two 20-year plans" on a global scale to eradicate illiteracy, starvation, transmissible disease, and low standards of living. This sounded technological, appeared in a political context, and was actually the ultimate in irrelevant moralism. The *political* problem he ran up against, as always, was

Russia—and there again he failed to say anything that was even accurate, much less revealing. ("We cannot hide the weaknesses in our democracy. If we take steps to overcome these weaknesses, then I believe the Russians, believing in the genuineness of our democracy, will move toward greater political freedom." And in a later editorial: "Wherever we meet Russia in Europe, it is not Russia that is the enemy, but the devastation itself.") In this keynote piece, and in those that followed, one witnesses the emergence of a pattern: purely rhetorical resolutions of problems occur more and more frequently and centrally—a certain sign of political helplessness. To be sure, now that Wallace no longer wields official power, he feels the need for a kind of action that was not so necessary in the halcyon days of the New Deal. He therefore talks more now of "progressives" *doing* than of the "common man" *being given*. But the new shibboleth is no better defined than the old one, and equally unhelpful.

IN THE December 30 issue of the *New Republic*, Wallace spoke out on labor. "My object at all times will be to find a legitimate basis for a sound and enduring industrial peace," he said. When, later, he subtly threatened labor with a fascist reaction to continued strikes in "essential" industries, we began to get an inkling of something more precise behind the vague phrase "industrial peace." Then, hearing Wallace baldly accept the proposition that workers in government-operated industries ought not to strike, while at the same time advancing a scheme for settling disputes that provided for government seizure as the final act, we become alarmed, quite properly, at his notion of a "legitimate" peace—*since the right to strike against the state is the one truly basic issue of freedom confronting the American public today*. That the present leader of the liberals should have exhibited such depthless misunderstanding of the modern state is significant beyond measure.

Wallace has given great emphasis to the

fact that he is "neither an officer nor a member" of the Progressive Citizens of America or of Americans for Democratic Action. He calls the conflict of the two groups over the issue of Stalinism "a comedy." However, it was he who delivered the principal address (December 29) at the founding conference of the Stalinist influenced PCA. In this speech he spoke of the existence of a struggle between "Russia-haters and Russophiles"—which muddled everything up by putting the issue in black and white—while raising himself to the Olympian somewhere-above-and-beyond.

Later, when it appeared that the liberal split might have a serious potential, Wallace further stretched his long legs to maintain his straddled balance. In an editorial called "The Enemy Is Not Each Other" (January 27), he rededicated himself to the "liberal cause" rather than to any particular group, and made the misinformed statement that Mrs. Roosevelt was not a member of ADA. She was and is, and an officer of that group quickly and loudly said so in print. This blunder only spotlighted Wallace's own reason for hedging on the conflict: political ambition. Mrs. Roosevelt is a widely respected humanitarian, patently uninterested in political power for herself.

It should not be too difficult to predict Wallace's role in a future progressive upsurge. As long as it is more Stalinist than socialist, and more religious than militant, he might well be at the head of it. But he would serve as the speechifying symbol of such a movement, rather than its actual leader. So far he has shown no talent as a practical politician. The actual leaders are no doubt already engaged in jockeying for position inside the trade-union movement.

In the first issue of the new *Wallace New Republic*, publisher Michael Straight introduced the liberal leader with these words: "The *New Republic* was founded to express the promise of American life. No American can express that promise as well and truly as Henry Wallace."

Yes—as promise.

SHOULD JEWS CHANGE THEIR OCCUPATIONS?

A Rational Approach to the "Maldistribution" Problem

SAMUEL H. FLOWERMAN

PROPHETIC voices are again warning American Jews that their economic position spells trouble for them—especially if there is a major depression. Well-meaning neighbors (and some not so well-meaning) urge the need to “normalize” Jewish occupational “maldistribution”—and not infrequently Jews themselves are heard singing the same ominous tune.

Typically, J. F. Brown, a social psychologist, calls upon Jewish leadership to dissuade fellow-Jews from entering those businesses and professions which they have already too conspicuously “overpopulated.” Zionists call for a return to manual labor and the soil. Others tell us that Jewry’s only hope of survival—elsewhere as well as in America—is to retire from all positions of economic concentration, prominence, or control; to retreat from all points at which they conspicuously come in contact with Gentile customers; to abandon all handling of goods that adds nothing to the value of such goods; and to seek their sustenance exclusively as farmers, mechanics, and factory hands.

A dispatch from Hungary reports a meeting of Jewish leaders called to protest a proposed land reform law that would make it impossible for Jews either to obtain new land or to repossess confiscated land holdings. Chief Rabbi Ferenc Hevesi’s plea was all too familiar—Jewish landlessness has

driven Jews into “undesirable occupations,” which help to breed anti-Semitism.

In other European countries, where Jewish communities are struggling back to life, Jewish leaders point to the pre-war clustering of Jews in commercial and professional callings as the chief reason for their misfortune. They beg their fellow-Jews not to repeat what they regard as tragic errors and to seek ways of earning a living that would shield them from the barbs of anti-Semitism.

IT is well understood that the Jewish economic pattern did not arise from choice. Historically, it developed from the fact that, although Jews have at some time been found in almost every kind of occupation, they were gradually forced out of many, and concentrated in a few. Against great odds, they often achieved some measure of success in the occupations left open to them. But where they distributed goods they were declared parasites; where they made the goods, the guilds were closed to them because they were said to excel their non-Jewish fellow workers (in Baden, the government declared that Jews “are too skillful and the Christian artisans will be unable to come up to their standards”). And even within the fields of work left open to them, they were often restricted to petty trades and money-lending by papal edicts and royal decrees. Where they healed the sick they were called controllers—and necromancers—of the healing arts. Where they contributed to letters, to the arts, to music, to science and scholarship, to human welfare—what was that but proof of their distaste for hard “productive” labor?

When walled off in ghettos, as in Poland, Jews were execrated as an alien, clannish enclave in the life of the nation. But if, as in Germany, they adopted the culture of the

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dominant group, they were hated as a poison in the country's bloodstream.

It is not commonly known that throughout the first fifteen centuries of their life in the Diaspora most Jews were farmers and craftsmen. In Sicily, they were the iron-mongers, the shipwrights, and the road-builders. Their work was so necessary to the economic life of the country that their Christian neighbors pleaded for their exemption from the Spanish expulsion order of 1492. Across the straits in Italy, according to the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, they were "workers."

In Poland, even at the dawn of the 19th century, there were still about three times as many Jewish craftsmen as Jewish merchants. Indeed, nearly all the tailors, hatters, tanners, carpenters, and blacksmiths of Poland were Jews.

But in France, England, and Germany, the economic policies of rulers early drove Jews into commercial pursuits, in some cases into finance alone. By the end of the 18th century, agriculture was virtually closed to Jews in most countries, largely because they were forbidden to own land. The craft guilds had long since shut their doors in the faces of Jews. In the 19th century, however, in the wake of the French Revolution, Jews found the doors of universities open, and through them entrance into the professions and sometimes larger mercantile establishments.

In Eastern Europe, emancipation never proceeded far enough to remove the legal barriers restraining Jewish occupational choice. And by the end of the 19th century, the existing occupational distribution, giving support to the myth of "Jewish control," became a pillar of reactionary politics, used from Czarist Russia to Nazi Germany. Poland complained bitterly at the sixth session of the League of Nations about the abnormal occupational structure of Polish Jews, while at the same time she imposed within her borders the severest restrictions against Jewish artisans and craftsmen.

Later, in Nazi Germany, Jews were kicked out of factories and workshops long before

they were put out of business, presumably to make it easier for Goebbels to prove that the Jews were parasites. Teen-age refugees who were stuck in Berlin when the air offensive began against Germany told this writer how German factory workers were shocked to learn that Jewish women forced to work alongside them in munitions plants were as good or better workers than "Aryans." According to my informants, this image of the Jew as a producer so bothered the Nazis that, even though they desperately needed the output of the Jewish women, they pulled them out of the factories (and sent many of them to the gas chambers and crematories).

So the contours of Jewish occupational distribution in Europe were set by a mold of restrictive covenants, church canons, and royal rulings. If you could not own land, if you could not join a craft guild, and if you could not obtain employment with the government—then your only choice was to go into some form of trade or to prepare for a profession.

Remarkable is the *diversity* of occupations in which Jews worked in the face of all manner of restrictions. Jacob Lestchinsky in 1930 estimated that, among the world Jewish population, workers (by his definition) were more numerous than merchants (and even petty trade, he suggested, is far from easy work). According to Lestchinsky's computations, almost eight million Jews worked for wages and professionally as against about six and a half in business.

IN THE light of this historical background, let us now look at the occupational pattern of American Jews.

All we know about the occupational stratification of Jews in the United States is to be found in a handful of limited "one-shot" studies, since the decennial United States census has no breakdown of workers by religion. Because these studies have not been made periodically, we have no scientific way of telling whether the occupational pattern of the Jew in America is changing, how fast, or in what direction. As limited studies, they

permit no comparisons between Jewish and non-Jewish workers in the same locality. Further, you can seldom compare the figures of different studies, because different investigators have used different occupational and industrial groupings. Finally, they are based on small or inadequate samples of the Jewish population. The number of Jews included in the best—and most nearly comparable—studies runs to about 110,000 out of an estimated 4,500,000 Jews in the country. This would be ample, numerically, if these were representative or typical samples. But, unfortunately, we haven't the slightest assurance that they are.

However, admitting all the shortcomings of these studies, we can perhaps make these generalizations:

Foreign-born Jews, who constitute roughly one-third of the Jewish population in the cities that have been studied, have a work pattern that differs from native-born Jews. These differences are due to their greater age, their language limitations, educational training, cultural differences, and the like. You find a smaller proportion of native-born Jews in manufacturing and mechanical industries, in trade (especially retail), and in domestic and personal service, and a larger proportion of native-born Jews in the professions and clerical occupations.

If we lump together the six cities of Dallas, Detroit, New London, Norwich, Passaic, and Trenton, for which studies are available, Jews are distributed occupationally something like this*: Trade ranks first by far, absorbing from 43 to 55 per cent of gainfully employed Jews. Manufacturing and mechanical occupations come next with 11 to 23 per cent. Another 5 to 20 per cent earn their living at clerical work. The much-discussed category of professional service includes 9 to 14 per cent of Jews. Domestic and personal service—a kind of catch-all clas-

sification which includes waiters, beauticians, barbers, cooks, etc.—accounts for 2 to 10 per cent. The remaining work groupings are: transportation and communication, 1 to 3 per cent; public service about 1 per cent; and "unclassified," up to 2 per cent.

Keeping in mind the serious weaknesses of these investigations, it seems true that a large proportion of Jews are in trade, manufacturing and mechanical pursuits, and professional service (the same is true for Canada, where we have government statistics), and that the smallest proportion of Jewish workers is in transportation and communication, and public service.

This gives us only *occupational* breakdowns and tells nothing about the *socio-economic status* of Jews, i.e., whether Jews are employers or employees, skilled or unskilled workers. Facts on socio-economic status—also not very reliable—are available on a comparative basis for at least three communities: Buffalo, Detroit, and San Francisco. According to these studies, the bulk of Jewish workers—36 to 40 per cent—can be classed as clerks and salespersons. Proprietors, managers, and officials constitute 26 to 31 per cent of the Jewish labor force. Skilled workers account for 6 to 16 per cent. Professionals constitute 8 to 14 per cent. The semi-skilled make up only 3 to 15 per cent, while the unskilled account for only 2 to 3 per cent of the total. (In Canada, there is a somewhat greater proportion of semi-skilled and unskilled Jewish workers. But it must be noted that the general population of Canada also has a greater proportion of such workers than the United States, and that more Canadian Jews—50 per cent of the total—are foreign-born.)

There is no point in this discussion in going into charges of industrial control by Jews. Suffice it to say that the *Fortune* survey in 1935 clearly established that there are very few industries in which Jews have controlling positions.

THE meaning of these figures would become clearer if we could compare them with figures for the general population in

* This picture might be somewhat changed if comparable information were available for New York City. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The few existing investigations of the New York City area use categories and concepts so different as to make it impossible to arrive at comparable quantitative estimates.

the same localities. But there are no comparable figures, for in none of these studies was the general population also surveyed. The only yardstick available—and this is offered with greatest temerity—is the figures for the country as a whole. Alba M. Edwards (in *Population: Comparative Occupational Statistics for the United States, 1870-1940*, U. S. Bureau of Census), using the 1940 census, divided the working population of the country into the following occupational groups (figures to nearest per cent): manufacturing and mechanical, 26 per cent; agriculture, 18 per cent; trade, 14 per cent; domestic and personal service, 10 per cent; transportation and communication, 9 per cent; clerical service, 12 per cent; professional service, 7 per cent; public service, 4 per cent; minerals, 2 per cent; forestry and fishing, less than 1 per cent.

Comparing these estimates with the results yielded by our "one-shot" studies, we find that the most outstanding difference is, as we expected, in trade: about 50 per cent of Jews gainfully occupied were in trade, against 14 per cent in the population as a whole. While we found 9 to 14 per cent of Jews in the towns studied engaged in the professions, in the general American population only 7 per cent were professionals. The percentages of Jews employed in the manufacturing and mechanical, transportation and communication, public service, and domestic and personal service categories were lower than those for the general population. The percentage of Jews in clerical occupations was lower than the national percentage in some cities, and more in others.

As for socio-economic comparisons between Jews and the general population, we are again able to make only primitive comparisons, using the 1940 census as a yardstick.

According to these figures, of the entire American labor force, 7 per cent were professional people (Jews: 9 to 14 per cent); 18 per cent were proprietors, managers, and officials (Jews: 26 to 31 per cent); 17 per cent were clerks, sales persons, and kindred workers (Jews: 36 to 40 per cent); 12 per

cent were skilled workers and foremen (Jews: 6 to 16 per cent); 21 per cent were semi-skilled workers (Jews: 3 to 15 per cent); and 26 per cent were unskilled workers (Jews: 2 to 3 per cent). The contrasts are striking, but expected: compared with the percentages for the whole country, many more Jews are clerks and salespersons, considerably more are proprietors, managers, and officials, a few more are professionals; far fewer Jews are semi-skilled workers, and hardly any are unskilled workers.

BEFORE we draw implications from these rough comparisons, what about the relation of Jews to general occupational trends in the country? For the country as a whole, in the past few decades, the greatest proportional increase in jobs has occurred among white-collar workers on all levels: clerks, middlemen, salesmen, proprietors, and officials, personal and professional service. Trade, transportation, and clerical occupations—all concerned with the distribution of goods—have also experienced a great increase. The greatest decline, again proportionately, has occurred in the "productive" industries. This decline is the other side of the coin of increased productivity per worker: in 1939 we produced as much as we had produced in 1929—but with eight to twelve million pairs of idle hands. Employment in agriculture leveled off around 1900, and since 1910 has been declining. So, too, with mining. The proportion of physicians and surgeons has remained fairly constant since 1910, primarily because of the reduction in the number of medical schools and the limitation of students in those that remain. Dentistry has had an upswing. (Better medical and dental care is still desperately needed by wide areas of the population.)

The outstanding fact is that the trend has been away from the "productive" occupations toward distributive and service occupations. This means wider opportunities for work with people: catering to their wants, coordinating their efforts, persuading and instructing them—in short, helping people in one way or another.

These occupational shifts aren't optional; in an economic and industrial sense they are compulsory. Take the occupational shifts which are occurring in industry. A survey of more than 2,000 different factory jobs in eighteen industries showed that more than half of the jobs required only one week's training on the job to become expert—not expert, however, at doing an all-around job, but expert at tending one machine that a technician sets up. About half of these semi-skilled jobs require only the ability to read, write, and speak simple English. It is clear that the shift from skilled to semi-skilled jobs in industry is not optional with the individual worker.

In the 1937-1938 recession these trends stood out in sharp relief. From May 1937 to June 1938, when a three-year low in employment was reached, unemployment in blue-collar occupations—manual and machine workers—rose far more rapidly than in the professions and distributive occupations. United States Employment Service analysts declared that the “secondary effects of the decline in industrial production on workers in white collar and service occupations were much less severe than the primary effects on manufacturing” (*Survey of Employment Service Information*, May 1939, U.S.E.S.).

Turning back to American Jews, we see that they are concentrated in precisely those occupational groupings that have been on the increase. It seems to be the case, moreover, that distributive occupations permit of many more small enterprise units than the productive, where larger capital outlay is necessary. (The Business Structure Unit of the U. S. Department of Commerce continues to marvel at the surprising vitality of small business.) And the professions, too, with the exception of law—there are always too many lawyers—are more favorably situated than occupations in the primary producing sector.

Should Jews, then, forsake the professions and the distributive and service occupations? They seem to be on the main job-highway of the country. Should they turn off into a side road? Specifically, should Jewish youth

be guided into non-commercial careers, as the Jewish Vocational Guidance Bureau of Berlin tried to do in 1929?

AN INDIVIDUAL'S motives for choosing a given occupation make a strange concoction. Think for a moment of why you chose—or found your way into—your present occupation, instead of any one of 30,000 possible others.

Maybe you wanted to earn a lot of money; or obtain job security; or social prestige; or a higher standard of living. Maybe you didn't know much about other kinds of work. Maybe some friends of yours were preparing for the same career. Maybe there was a depression and this was the only kind of work you could get into. Perhaps your parents urged you into one of the professions, or your father had built up a profitable business and you thought that you might as well go into it. Perhaps discrimination in professional schools and colleges, or job bias in some form, helped you make up your mind. Not to mention the countless psychological determinants—conscious and unconscious—such as ability, aptitude, personality, and so on.

But behind most of these as prime motivation is the great American—not Jewish—tradition of vertical mobility, of wanting to get ahead for yourself in a system of free opportunity so that you too might enjoy and give your family all the opportunities and advantages that spell out the American way of life.

Someone has aptly said that the class struggle in America is not a struggle of one class against another, but a struggle to climb out of one class into a higher one. Competition and the struggle for worldly goods is the American norm. Calvin Coolidge once said that “the business of America is business.” And business America is an urban America. From a country of pioneer and rural life, America has become a land of big cities—more than half our population is urban.

The culture of America—not only of Jews—is urban and “pushing.” With the possible exception of the Pennsylvania Dutch, the

cultural patterns of old world immigrants have crumbled against the buttresses of the American industrialization and its culture; they have become what America made them.

Is the occupational pattern of the Jews in this country their own, or did they, too, develop it in America's image? Most of the Jews who came here seeking a better way of life for themselves and their children came from an urban commercial background. They had been workers, tradesmen, and small shopkeepers in the urban centers of Eastern Europe. They settled in American cities not unlike the European towns and cities they had lived in; and they took whatever work they could get. If over the years the occupational distribution of Jews seems to have been changing, as Nathan Goldberg points out in the *Jewish Review* (Oct.-Dec. 1945), the changes "have, generally speaking, resembled those which have occurred in the economic structure of the country as a whole, although not of the same magnitude."

You can often hear it said by Jews and Gentiles that Jews have unusually lofty aspirations, especially for their children. Every Jewish boy, they say, is a budding doctor or lawyer.

But is this really a Jewish trait or is it again a part of the general picture of American culture?

According to a *Fortune* survey of American high-school youth (November and December 1942), "the great majority of our high-school students look forward to better things in adulthood than most of them will get. More expect to go on with their education [about 29 per cent] after high-school than can possibly be accommodated. . . . And, most serious of all, more than a third of our youth plan to enter the professions that, with crowding, now include less than 5 per cent of our adults, while only 11.8 per cent of them plan to go into farming or factory work or mechanical work and other skilled trades. [An additional 21 per cent plan to enter business, clerical, and secretarial occupations]. . . . This seems to mean that our

youth has set its sights tragically high, *much as it may be in the American tradition*" (my italics).

A. J. Walker, who studied the vocational choices of Negro college students at Morgan College (*Journal of Negro Education*, Spring 1946), reports that of 173 freshmen questioned, 93 per cent had made choices of professional careers, whereas only 7 per cent of their parents were engaged in the professions and only 7 per cent in white-collar occupations. Studying the occupational trends of Italians in New York City, D'Alessandre in 1931 found that the "choice of Italian [high school] boys was concentrated in about ten leading occupations. There was a marked preponderance of a choice for the professions."

Getting ahead, moving out of the rut of low income and poor plumbing, is part of the American dream. To seek professional opportunities is not the tendency of Jews, Italians, or Negroes alone; but for members of sub-dominant groups in our culture, high occupational aspirations may have enriched meanings: a professional status can open many doors in our culture.

I am not speaking here against efforts to broaden the job vistas of all young people. Certainly it is undesirable that the young people of any ethnic or subcultural group should limit their occupational choices to only a handful of the most popular careers, for which many have neither aptitude nor talent. For most youngsters, the idea of choosing from among some 30,000 different occupations has very little meaning. We listed earlier some of the reasons why people get into certain occupations, and certainly lack of occupational information, not in any way a Jewish malady, must be added to them. Clearly here is an area of operation for our schools in which they have until now been singularly uninterested.

But why single out Jews as being especially inclined to ignore available knowledge in choosing their occupations? Jews, like other ethnic groups, are only moving into the occupations which by American standards seem most suitable.

THE argument for Jewish occupational redistribution, however, is not punctured by explaining how Jews got into their occupations, or by demonstrating their innocence of special *unworthy* or *un-American* motives. The proponents of redistribution assert that, however blameless Jews may be, their occupational pattern makes them so vulnerable economically and politically that drastic preventive measures must be taken. We have already cited the evidence for our belief that, given present trends, concentration in the distributive and service trades is economically sound rather than the opposite. But how about political vulnerability? Doesn't the concentration of Jews in the functions of middle-men between producer and consumer make them particularly susceptible to political attacks as profiteers, black marketeers, exploiters of the people?

The experience of the Jews of Germany—who, like Jews in America, were concentrated in business and the professions—gives force to this argument. To explain the German debacle—and by implication point out the American danger—students have resorted to the Marxist conception of the middle class as grist ground between the millstones of the working class and the upper class of industrialists, financiers, and aristocrats. In times of economic crisis, Gentiles suffering in the decline of the middle class found in Jewish members of the middle class a suitable scapegoat.

Jews are warned by those who view economic developments in the United States through class-conscious eyes to discard their middle-class status for their own protection. Non-managerial "productive" jobs, we are told, are "safer" than managerial, commercial, and self-employed occupations.

But arguments on the other side are readily at hand. Myrdal, in *The American Dilemma*, sees the Marxian concept of class struggle as "a superficial and erroneous notion," at least when applied to all Western countries. Social class consciousness is only dimly felt in America, according to Myrdal. Occupation and income rather than birth constitute indices of status. And vertical

mobility from class to class, at least in terms of occupation, while slowing up, is still not uncommon. Even movement within a class is far more fluid today than in pre-Hitler Europe. It is in our tradition—with exceptions, of course—for a worker to tell his boss or foreman to go to hell and stalk off his job. And it is in that same tradition for the boss—again with exceptions—to fire a worker on the spot and pay him off. In Germany, by contrast, job and class status were so deeply ingrained that, even for some time after Hitler came to power, non-Aryans were given long periods of notice and separation pay when they were discharged. German employees changed jobs far less frequently than is usual in this country, and this fact was a significant symptom of the state of German economy and class stratification.

Before Hitler, the growth of cartels and trusts had produced what the Institute of Social Research called "a new bureaucracy descended from the lower middle class." The development of this new bureaucracy, coupled with the increasing incidence of bankruptcy among small business enterprises, weakened the economic and social position of German Jews. Cut-throat competition in marginal economic fields, concentration of economic power, inflation, increased productivity per worker through labor-saving devices—all these further depressed the already sinking middle-class. The Jews qualified as scapegoat par excellence on two counts: (1) they were themselves members of the engulfed middle-class, and subject to the pressures applied to that class by other classes; and (2) they were the most vulnerable target for the frustrated Gentile middle class. If the middle class of Germany could have been considered the nation's circulatory system, then it could be said that the Jews as the red corpuscles in that blood stream were attacked from two sources: hardening of the arteries of their host, and attack from the white blood corpuscles.

BUT in the United States, although ominous signs can be seen, there is still no real basis for likening the position of the

middle class to that of the pre-Hitler German middle class. For instance, although independent small business in manufacturing has fallen off about 36 per cent since 1910, small business in wholesale and retail trade has increased about 58 per cent. The operation of anti-trust laws (the recent A & P decision, the decision against block-booking of motion pictures, etc.) and the nature of our form of distribution have kept small business amazingly buoyant. To cite only one example: there are in the United States today more than 50,000 independent drug stores as against 3,752 chain-affiliated establishments.

The important fact is that in the United States today *tertiary* industries (named thus by Colin Clark) characterize our economic stage of development. In the tertiary stage, a country finds that with a rising standard of living and more highly developed technology the demand for a greater and wider distribution of services and goods grows. This leads in turn to a rise in the number of small business enterprises, a rise in the proportion of technical and managerial employees, a decrease in the proportion of skilled and semi-skilled labor; a rise in the proportion of white-collar, sales, and clerical workers—Lewis Corey's new middle class.* This new middle class represents a considerable slice—about one-fourth—of our total working population.

In short, a good case can be made out against viewing the American social-economic picture along Marxist class struggle lines. If this view is correct, the middle-class position of the Jews in America merely places them in the center of the forward-moving main stream—and not in the vortex of a whirlpool formed by two cross currents.

WE HAVE spoken so far of the arguments for occupational redistribution, rather than the program for achieving it. Let us assume for the moment that some advantage could be found in distributing Jews evenly throughout the American economy. How

could practical proposals be formulated for doing so?

To begin with, how would you compute the just share of Jews in the American work picture? Although they make up only about 4 per cent of the total population, Jews constitute perhaps 11 per cent of the population in the cities they live in. Would one fix work quotas of 4 or 11 per cent? The next problem is that of setting up critical percentages for each occupation; and there are about 30,000 different occupations in the United States. Would you also establish a *numerus clausus*—for that is what it would be—for each socio-economic category—so many owners of small businesses, so many employees, and so on? Would you applaud the schools and colleges that now exclude Jews or would you merely help develop different quotas? What kind? Or, would you have Jews move in large numbers out of occupations that are on the upswing in our economy into occupations that are declining in importance?

But let us assume that you succeed in overcoming the problems of arriving at "equitable" quotas in selected occupations. The next problem is the enforcement of such quotas. Suppose that all concerned parties agreed on the ratios calculated. How would they be enforced? Through an American Jewish Conference, a Synagogue Council, rabbinical bodies? Or perhaps one would enlist the aid of Jewish Vocational Services and the Jewish Occupational Council, so that they might push all their efforts—as did the Jewish Vocational Guidance Bureau of Berlin—to get Jewish youth to prepare for "suitable" occupations instead of those they have set their hearts on and have the ability to succeed in?

What chances are there that one could obtain any agreement among Jews or Jewish groups with regard to the whole notion of self-imposed occupational limitations, let alone agreement on enforcing these restrictions? This leaves, then, the invoking of government aid. (I say *invoking* government aid because were any government to launch such a program except on request, its action would obviously sound the death-knell of

* Lewis Corey, "The Middle Class." *Antioch Review*, Spring 1945.

freedom for all its citizens, Jews included.) Can you picture Jewish leaders calling at the White House to enlist the help of the President to bring American Jews to new school and work balances? Who better than the President of the United States exemplifies the possibilities of vertical mobility?

TO SEEK the elimination or reduction of anti-Semitism through such palliatives as occupational redistribution is, as Otto Klineberg has said, to confuse cause and effect. Has anti-Semitism ever needed rational excuses? Must the Jews, seeking some logic, some "why" to their persecution, always fasten upon some aspect of their own life as a probable cause of their persecution? Of what avail have been nose-bobbing, name and faith-changing, intermarriage, alienation from the Jewish community? If these desperate measures have been so ineffective, what expectation of success is there now in some form of occupational redistribution and deurbanization?

The lot of the Jew in America is inextricably woven into the fabric of democracy in America. If our form of political democracy should falter, nothing the Jew can do—now or in the future—can save him. On the other hand, as a citizen in a democracy, the Jew has a great stake in its development. He has—and must exercise—the same duties and obligations, but also the same rights and privileges as any other citizen. For him to waive his rightful opportunities is as injurious to him and as disloyal to the democratic faith and to his country as would be the neglect of his duties and obligations.

What does all this mean, job-wise, for the Jew in America? He must maintain his right to choose the life calling for which he has the ability, opportunities, and desire. This in turn means freedom to choose, to the highest possible degree, untrammelled by

parents, tradition, school and college officials, self-imposed or government-supported restrictions. This does not imply a game of blind man's buff; our schools and government must continuously provide the most up-to-date information on occupations and job trends. In the schools the task of preparing for a job must be considered as integral a part of our formal education as learning to read and write. The widened occupational horizons made possible by such learning materials—which implies some form of curriculum revision—must be vigorously supplemented by adequate counseling facilities for young people and their parents.

Too early specialization of training must be assiduously avoided, chiefly because of the complexity of our occupational structure and the uncertainties of our economic system. Preparation for broad job "families" (related occupations) rather than for highly specific vocations is much to be preferred; this gives a youngster more than one string to his bow.

Finally, a stable economy is far and away the best insurance against the menace of assaults by one group against another's economic position. Full employment; adequate provisions for social security; a stable price structure; adequate housing; a government elected by all of the people and responsive to their wishes—these are the necessities. For it is only under such a system of life that the selection of a career, of a school, the finding and holding of a job, will depend only on an individual's ability, and not on his ancestry. It is to the achievement of this kind of society that we should bend our efforts.

The acid test in selecting any occupation must be: Is the work personally satisfying and socially desirable? And not: Is it good or bad for the Jews? What is good for other Americans is good for the Jews.

THE PEOPLES OF MY HOME TOWN

Before Nationalism Crushed Rumania's Design for Living

SOLOMON F. BLOOM

MOVING from one continent to another is a confusing experience. In my case, as in the case of most immigrants, years of concentration on discovering America, and being discovered by it, almost obliterated from my mind the place where I was born and brought up. Whether it is Hitler, or the influence of Henry James, or plain resistance to being melted down, or all of these, for some reason I have been thinking a good deal about Harlau. I am, after all, a man of two worlds, not one.

When I recalled my home town it came back to me as an image of Central European life before the First World War. Harlau is a more or less typical market town in the northern corner of old Rumania, the "Regat." It straddles the main highway between the traditional capital of Moldavia, Jassy, and the smaller provincial city of Botoshani. (Much of the town was destroyed in 1944 by artillery fire, for Harlau stands on the line where the Russian army was pinned for

several months by the Nazis before taking Jassy.) On one side of Harlau is Targul Frumos, which means "the pretty town," and on the other an unattractive and petty market place, Frumusica, "the pretty little one." But Harlau held an unchallenged historical superiority. We boys firmly believed that it had been a favorite of Stephen the Great, and we played frequently about a cave that led, by secret underground passages winding for forty miles, to the buried treasure of the 16th century prince of Moldavia.

The official population figure given to us in school was 4,500, which we agreed to raise by easy annual stages of 500—a minimum for any decent city—to nearly 10,000. This promoted Harlau to a place among the more important centers of the country. The fact was that we were constantly losing people through emigration to larger cities and especially to the United States.

THE Harlauer were mostly Jews, many of whose families had lived in Rumania for centuries. Others had moved over from Austria-Hungary, principally from nearby Bukowina, during the past century. Some of the more prosperous merchants and wholesalers and the Jewish physician were of Austrian descent or citizenship; so were the two *friseurs*—who not only cut your hair and shaved you but also pulled teeth, applied cups, let blood, and hazarded medical diagnoses—and one of the two Hasidic rabbis who visited the town every other year with their lordly retinues. A large number of the Jewish inhabitants, perhaps a majority, were descendants of refugees who fled from Russian rule about a century ago. Moldavia and Wallachia were then not yet united as a national state and lived under the rela-

THIS autobiographical footnote to history brightly illuminates the process by which the principle of national self-determination, after World War I, tore apart the fabric of harmonious living among the varied peoples of the old Austrian and Turkish Empires and left them the embattled racists of today. SOLOMON F. BLOOM is professor of history at Brooklyn College, specializing in European intellectual history. He has written for the *New Republic*, *Politics*, and various scholarly journals, and has made a number of contributions to *COMMENTARY*. He also served for a period on the staff of the *New York Times* and is the author of a book, *The World of Nations: A Study of the National Implications in the Work of Karl Marx* (1941). Dr. Bloom was born in Rumania in 1903, came to this country in 1920, attended the College of the City of New York, and earned his doctorate at Columbia University.

tively mild rule of the old Turkish Empire. The refugees were generally boys who were shipped across the Prut River by their despairing parents, to escape the rigors and profanities of the conscription system of Czar Nicholas I. The soldiers served for twenty-five years and ate *treif* (un-kosher) food; many of them returned as Christians. Soldiering amounted to de-Judaizing.

In time, after the rise and ingrown development of the national state of Rumania, the Jews of Harlau and other Moldavian towns were cut off from their kin in Bessarabia and the Ukraine. And the Pruth was a mere thirty miles away! We looked chiefly toward the West; in immediate geographic terms, this meant Austria and, more vaguely, Germany. The Germans indeed were generally regarded as philo-Semitic, which is not strange in view of the persecutions and pogroms in Russian, Rumanian, and even Hungarian areas before the First World War. So isolated had we become from Russian Jewry that only in the winter of 1916-17, when a Russian army crossed the river to assist Rumania against imperial Germany, did Harlau discover the existence of a modern Yiddish literature. We promptly set to reading, beginning of course with the stories of Sholom Aleichem. Then Mendele Mocher Sforim, the grandfather of Yiddish literature, died in Odessa. We Harlauer had arrived a little late.

Across differences of origin there ran a deeper social difference in the Jewish community. Merchant and craftsman were worlds apart. They worshipped in different synagogues, and avoided each other in the bathhouse on Fridays. The merchants were secular-minded, progressive, "modern." The craftsmen were old-fashioned. True, they were no longer organized into guilds, but the typical shop counted a master who did not disdain to take needle or hammer in hand, a journeyman or two laboring incredibly long hours for short wages, and the lowly apprentice, who did more house work than shop work.

The snobbism of the poorest merchant and his family toward the richest of master

craftsmen was intense, unbending, and fully repaid in resentment. My own family, though hardly prosperous (no rich Harlauer emigrated), was bourgeois. Father owned a grocery and produce business in the center of town. He was usually away, collecting produce in the villages and transporting it to the railroad or to nearby export centers like Targul Frumos; Mother, intermittently assisted by a salesman and a maid, ran the store and somehow raised seven children. A slow but sure learner, I assimilated carefully the prejudices of my class, which looked upon all manual labor, even the most skilled, as degrading. Early influences are strong, and even today, though I have met Marxism more than half-way, the typewriter is my only spiritual compromise with the classless society. I still prefer to do first drafts in longhand, and in moments of high feeling prefer an old-fashioned pen to the mechanical—and therefore suspiciously proletarian—fountain pen. Back home, it was considered extraordinary that my best friend, the only son of a well-to-do tailor, should be admitted to the circle of the enlightened bourgeoisie; but then the reason was extraordinary. For Marcu Buium (Rumanian for Mordechai Benjamin) was extraordinarily brilliant and outshone all the mercantile rest of us. I remember well how he once engaged the older leaders of town opinion in debate on Zionism and electrified a large audience by flinging down the challenge of *Le Cid*:

*Je suis jeune, il est vrai; mais aux âmes
bien nées,*

*La valeur n'attend point le nombre des
années.*

Yet Buium remained to the end—an early end, at twenty-one—"a *shneider's a zihn*," and my friends and I felt not a little self-conscious when visiting with him, behind his father's shop in a back street.

THERE were several nationalities in town, in addition to the Jews. A few expatriated Austrian subjects practiced their hereditary craft of pottery, and produced wares much

finer than those of the Rumanian village potters. I do not remember their linguistic affiliation, but I think they were Slovaks, like the traditional besom-binders of the larger towns. A Russian group, called *Lipovani*, had settled in town mainly as hog-raisers and butchers for the peasant trade.

Then there were Germans. Two families of German wheelwrights turned out the better carriages and wheels for Harlau and the surrounding district. The pharmacist was a German from Austria, who regarded Rumanians and Jews with impartial contempt. You wiped your feet in the summer, or your boots in the winter, before intruding into his sparkingly clean and confusingly scented Holy of Holies, which was located in a two-story building, the only skyscraper in town, on our main street, Strada Stefan cel Mare. The pharmacist sported a trim Vandyke, also the only one in town. Fortunately for him, he did not have to talk to his customers, who always brought him messages from the physicians in Latin. His only direct intercourse with the customers was to mention the price, the only fixed price in Harlau, by the way.

A few Levantines—Greeks, Armenians, Turks—were engaged in characteristic businesses such as cafés and candy stores. It was inconceivable that a Jew should manufacture nougat, for example, which the boys thought was pressed into shape in unprintable ways. One of the cafés, which served non-alcoholic drinks, mostly tea and coffee, was operated by a native of Asia Minor whom our elders assigned to the people of the notorious Haman. Our *timkhe*—Hebrew for “miserable”—was a quiet and likable old fellow, but on Purim, when we celebrated the fall of the tyrant who proposed to exterminate the Jews, he shut up shop, drew the blinds, and went into a kind of mourning. Our Purim was his Yom Kippur.

The itinerant merchants were as mixed as the residents. Only the Turks sold coffee grinders, for instance. The traveling salesmen who peddled prayer-books and shawls and phylacteries generally came from Austria. A contractor from Italy built our new

town hall, which overlooked the business district from a slight rise. He brought his own gang of skilled masons, who settled in town for a whole year, with their families, to complete the job. This was in a day when national walls were neither so many nor so high as they became in the years between the two world wars. Movement was still free in Central Europe. We drank coffee, prayed, and built houses on lines stretching from Italy to Turkey to Austria.

WHETHER settled or migratory, all these groups got along fairly well. Their occupations dovetailed conveniently to produce a neat economic mosaic. Trades and enterprises were divided according to hereditary specialties, almost like the guilds and corporations of the Byzantine Empire or the medieval towns of the West. The various nationalities did not intermarry or mix very much socially, but they showed otherwise an ingrained tolerance, or at least a good-humored indifference.

But neither the Jews nor the other groups got along so well with the native Rumanian population that surrounded and engulfed them. The commercial-minded townsmen thought the Rumanians parochial in outlook. Yet these backward people were the ruling “nation” and as such exercised an official and officious superiority. They were a small minority in town but a large majority in the district, that is, in the villages roundabout. This territorial preponderance gave them their privileged political position, under the doctrine of national self-determination, which brought all the Central European states into being. In such agrarian regions, the favored nation was naturally the populous peasantry or, speaking more realistically, its more or less primitive leadership, the semi-literate, white-collar, lower middle class of aspiring clerks and office-holders.

That was why the few Rumanians of Harlau held the national monopoly of administrative, bureaucratic, and political office; of the jobs, the nuisance value, and the graft. The mayor, his council and clerical assistants, the police chief, his sergeants and

night watchmen, the judges and lawyers and their secretaries and notaries, the tax-gatherers and the inspectors of weights and measures, the street-cleaners and lamp-lighters and the firemen, the principal and teachers of the state-supported school, the holders of licenses to distribute spirits, salt, and tobacco, which were state monopolies—all these and their kind were Rumanians. They supervised, recorded, intimidated, mulcted, and, when their palms were insufficiently greased with *baksheesh*, pushed around the non-Rumanians. In short, the *lumpen* cast off by the village and the periphery of the town ran the community of traders, professionals, skilled craftsmen, and specialized industrial workers. This was national self-determination, when what Harlau needed much more was home rule and an atmosphere of fluid opportunity cleansed of invidiousness. Only in such an atmosphere might the individual overcome the rigidities of hereditary specialization and cultural isolation, of tribal craft, and the mosaic of Harlau become a "melting pot."

DOMINATED by the village politically, the town was the economic leader. It brought the village into contact with the wider world, multiplied and fructified its wealth, and raised its standards of consumption and exchange. On Sundays and special market days, thousands of peasants swarmed into its streets and fair places, carrying, on beast or back, wheat, maize, barley, oats, nuts, fruits, furs, fowl, and eggs. Most of the produce, however, was picked up in the villages by Jewish traders operating from town in horse-drawn carts. (None of the townspeople owned teams of oxen; that was for the peasants. . . .) The surplus beyond the needs of the town was shipped to the larger cities and thence abroad, mainly to Austria-Hungary and Germany.

In exchange—a money exchange that frequently looked like plain barter—the town stores supplied the peasants with the products of its craftsmen and the stuffs of distant and foreign manufacture and production: salt, herring, groceries, and of course wines

and hard liquors; cloth, the rudimentary leather sandals (*opinci*) which take the place of shoes in Central Europe, ready-to-wear clothes, and the national costume of white shirts, tight long trousers, and broad red stomachers, made familiar in the United States by newsreels of the Albanian army on the march.

The town was the place to which the peasant ran away to forget his troubles and drown his grievances. One day in 1907, after news of the agrarian rebellions in Russia had finally got around, the villagers converged upon Harlau in their tens of thousands, very angry at the landowners—none of whom lived in town. The greatest landowner in the district was Prince Ghika, a descendant of the Phanariots (originally from the Greek district of Phanar in Constantinople), whom the Turks of old had employed as the tax-farmers, bureaucrats, translators, and even provincial governors of their empire. Prince Ghika lived in lonely splendor in a palace several miles out of town. He spoke perfect French and German and wretched Rumanian. (He practiced his German on the Austrian-Jewish barber whom he ordered fetched in a magnificent carriage several times a week.)

The peasants, preferring to tackle lesser fry than the great prince, congregated in town instead of in the palace court. One of my earliest recollections is looking out of a tiny window in the attic over our grocery store at a threatening mob milling in the narrow Strada Stefan cel Mare. Somehow the expected pogrom did not occur. In the evening a regiment of foot-soldiers arrived from Botoshani to find all the peasants gone.

The secular antagonism to the town confused the peasants in their struggle with their traditional rural masters, before whom they were little better than serfs or slaves. This helped to solve their problems no more than it helped to solve the problems of the townsmen. Nationalistic agitators could always divert peasant resentment to the dreadful foreigners, who had lived in the country for centuries and without whom all trade and industry would have collapsed.

IF HARLAU had been variegated, as it was, and the hinterland solidly Rumanian, the picture would still retain a kind of simplicity. But there were multi-colored patches even in the area surrounding the town. If you drew a circle with a radius of, say, ten miles, you would enclose half a dozen nationalities, again assorted by trades and callings, alongside of the Rumanians.

There was the village of Maxut nearby, a small industrial settlement consisting of a glass factory and the office of a forest company. A trunk railway established in Harlau in the early years of the century had stimulated industrial enterprise. Glass-blowing consumes much firewood and the factory was nestled conveniently in the forested hills. Everything—sand, transportation to distant markets—was available in our district—everything, that is, except glass-blowers. For them the company had to go all the way to Saxony. A whole community of craftsmen, complete with families, preacher, and Marxism, was imported, transplanted into company houses, and supplied with a company church, school, and store. Some of the workers became permanent residents; others, loath to leave their native land forever, contracted for a few years' work and were then replaced by other Saxons.

The German community of Maxut was as distinct and self-contained as the Jewish. The cultural level of this run-of-the-mill proletarian group was far above the new environment. The workmen and their families continued to speak German, learning enough Rumanian to conduct international relations. The Jewish traders of Harlau met them more than half-way by simulating a little German. Again, there was little general mixing with other groups, although some of the children, being Christians, were readily admitted to the state school. The German dress was distinctive, too: on Sunday the workmen appeared in embroidered velvet jackets and shorts and Alpine hats.

I came to know something of the inner life of Maxut while boarding one winter with a family there. My recollections are pleasant although—perhaps I should say be-

cause—they center largely around the kerosene-lighted dinner table. The meals were heavier and there was more meat than I was accustomed to, in those days of the First World War. This was entirely to the taste of a growing boy. I remember learning, amid the steam of *Braten* and *Knoedel*, my first *Lieder*, in the family of an excellent glass-blower and middle-of-the-road Socialist.

The reason I boarded away from home—where I left behind five little sisters and a brother, to be raised somehow—was that I had a job as the assistant to the assistant to the executive secretary of the company that was cutting the forest. I was jack-of-all trades in the small office, but my main assignment was to reproduce, on an ancient gelatin hand-press, the beautiful calligraphy of the secretary's reports to the home office in Bucharest. Like the town pharmacist, and I think also the investors in the company, the secretary was a German from Austria. He was a short man, stocky, cultivated, and morose. A character out of Chekhov, he brooded and chafed over his exile among the savage tribes in the provinces. He never spoke to me, except through the older and more sophisticated assistant.

The work of our company was divided between two national monopolies. Rumanian peasants from nearby villages carted the wood to the factory and to the railway station in ox-carts and sleighs. But they were never hired to cut it. This work was reserved for an informal corporation of Hungarian and Ruthenian lumberjacks, with a sprinkling of Turks. After spending a long spring and summer farming their little plots in Bukowina and Galicia, these wood-cutters would arrive in the fall to go into a kind of industrial hibernation. They lived in primitive huts, cut trees with large saws and axes, and ate the other mammals of the forest.

On Sunday these strange, heavily-bearded creatures, enveloped in several layers of fur and swinging significant walking sticks whose handles were miniature axes, invaded our office clamoring for pay and scaring the wits out of me. They spoke no Rumanian and little German, and never went to the

local churches. The only link between them and the Rumanian carters was our office. The German capitalist sat at the center, integrating their activities and relating them to the distant market.

BUT in other fields, such as truck gardening and melon raising, enterpriser and worker belonged to the same national "guild." When, in the spring, the Ruthenians and Hungarians set out northward for Austrian parts and the Turks headed southward, they crossed paths with another species of dormice, the Bulgarians, Slav in language, semi-Mongol in ancient origin, and Greek Orthodox in religion. These got down to work at once, opened their neat barns, polished their tools, broke up their rented soil near town, and appeared in the market stalls within a few brief weeks with the most luscious vegetables in the world. This whole trade was in their hands. They learned a little Rumanian to deal with their customers, but retained their foreign citizenship, as did the other migratory and even some of the resident groups. On an appointed day in the fall, probably a religious holiday, the Bulgarians vanished, weighted down by their broad leather belts filled with paper money and coins, bound for Dobrudja and Bulgaria, where people live to be a hundred simply by eating a lot of *yoghurt*. Indeed these gardeners looked timeless. It was a game among the boys to guess their age after a brief glance; they looked fresh enough to be adolescent and were wrinkled enough to be not only old but long buried.

The Bulgarians found other Slavs in the district, let alone in town. A large group of Russian farmers had settled a village in the neighborhood. These were descendants of deserters and stragglers from the Russian army that passed through Moldavia in 1877-78 to make war on the Turks; the Czar nearly took Constantinople that time! The village was called Flamanzi, which means "the hungry people." Could the *kasha* have given out in the victorious army? Another group of *Lipovani* had settled a rather infertile valley in the hinterland and raised

melons, pumpkins, and squashes in their many varieties. They monopolized this trade as the Bulgarians monopolized truck gardening. The Russian groups were, of course, Greek Orthodox, like the Rumanians, but they preferred to worship in their own onion-steeped churches and to be baptized and buried by Russian priests. If a *Lipovan* was important enough, the Russian bishop came all the way from Jassy to bury him.

We were very careful to distinguish the *Lipovani* from their strange kinsmen, the *Skoptsi*, who virtually monopolized coach-driving in the larger towns of the country. A *Skopets* drove Prince Ghika's carriage. These beardless and high-voiced sectaries castrated themselves, some of them after marrying and having a child, on the admonition of St. Matthew (19: 12): "... there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it let him receive it." The *Skoptsi* have been scattered to the four winds by the persecution of the Czars.

Shall I mention the Gypsies? They were too vagrant, and belonged—or rather didn't belong—everywhere. Their long trains of covered wagons, brimming over with pots, rugs, and infants, would be rushed through town by the rural gendarmes. They were not allowed to settle in populated places; one came upon their camps at the roadside. The Gypsies were reputed to steal little girls, presumably for the white slave trade, and mothers were alert whenever they were known to be in the neighborhood. One of my sisters disappeared on such an occasion, but fortunately only for an hour or two. The more positive contribution of the Gypsies was metal-working, tinkering, fiddling, fortune-telling, and trading in horses—not always their own, it was whispered.

WITH all their Bohemian color, the Gypsies were merely a patch on the Joseph's coat which was the Harlau district. The countryside was varied, although less so than the town. Rather than just Rumanian, the district was Rumanian-German-Jewish-Bulgarian-Ruthenian-Greek, to be brief. Only

politics was dully uniform and integral; all else was multiform, kaleidoscopic, characteristically Central European. The whole of the area lying between Western Europe and the farther reaches of Russia and the East was more than a frozen ethnological mosaic; it was a living organism functioning through ethnic divisions of labor. In "much of Central Europe"—I quote from C. A. Macartney's *Problems of the Danube Basin* (Cambridge, 1942, pp. 45-6)—the market gardeners are "Bulgarians; the stop-me-and-buy-one men, Macedonians; the horse copers, hangmen, and fiddlers, Gypsies; the itinerant besom-binders, Slovaks. Some villages of Albania, the Rhodopes and Hungary consist almost entirely of masons and bricklayers. The male population of one such village in southwest Hungary built much of the Turkish capital of Ankara, and no mean proportion of the new buildings in Park Lane [London]." Such "nations" are functional more than linguistic. "You are a subtle nation, you physicians," wrote Ben Jonson—in an age when the West, too, wore a variegated aspect.

High-school boys in Harlau, strolling self-importantly of an evening on Strada Stefan cel Mare, spoke French almost habitually; especially the older ones in addressing the younger! They had first exchanged Yiddish for Rumanian and then had spurned Rumanian. The educated classes all over Central Europe, whether in town or country, preferred French, and sometimes German, to their native tongues. But the new "national" state must promote and impose a distinctive language; and this language, on the notion of self-determination, must be the rudest and least developed—that of the benighted rural population. As the energetic and skillful classes were subjected to peasant leadership, and the town to the country, the advanced culture was subordinated to the barely literate. Can any country progress if its urban elements are shorn of influence? Has any country ever done so?

Society moved backward, but statesmen like Woodrow Wilson, who added their powerful voices to the demands for national self-determination, didn't know why. Wilson,

for example, was brought up in two American states—Georgia and South Carolina—which had extraordinary homogeneity of ethnic origin and tradition. Wilson's contemporary, Thorstein Veblen, knew better; a century ago, when Veblen was born, his native Minnesota consisted of an ingrown group of recent Norwegian immigrants, a sharply set-off community of Irish Catholics, and a Yankee-dominated town population. The divisions, as in Harlau, were economic as well as religious and cultural. Now suppose Minnesota had become a "national" state whose favors and advantages were assigned exclusively to one of the three groups. . . . No wonder Veblen wrote, in 1917, that "full and free self-determination runs counter to the rule of live and let live."

Veblen was closer to Harlau than Wilson. I thought of him as I watched motion pictures taken in my home town in the mid-thirties. I could hardly believe my eyes. My memory painted it as a bright little community, with a busy main street, punctuated by smart store-signs. The latter-day reality was dismal and dilapidated.

In the features of Harlau, as in those of the rest of Central Europe, was written the terrible depression of the twenties. The empires of the Hapsburgs and Romanovs had been dismantled and with them the economic patterns they had embodied. National and tariff walls were proliferated and rose higher and higher, until life was confined in prison cells. Men made themselves smaller to enter them, like Milton's devils squeezing into Pandaemonium to listen to Satan:

. . . they but now who seem'd
In bigness to surpass Earth's Giant Sons
Now less than smallest Dwarfs, in narrow
room
Throng numberless. . . .

Then came Hitler. The mosaic of traditional variety and cunning interplay of parts was broken up entirely. The pieces of glass flew apart. The great hammer came down. Harlau, with countless other towns and cities, was ground into dust.

UNITED NATIONS: CULTURAL DIVISION

Unesco's Program and Problems

STEPHEN SPENDER

THE United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (Unesco) exists under the charter of the United Nations, which called upon the members of UN to create an organization to promote the cause of peace by means of international cooperation in science, education, and culture.

During the first prenatal months of its existence Unesco was a preparatory commission drawing up a program, a plan of action. This program, presented to the first General Conference of Unesco in Paris last December, is an interesting survey of the possible ways in which intellectual collaboration can be organized. It includes plans for rehabilitation, in science, education, and culture, of countries devastated by war; proposals for world surveys of such problems as illiteracy; certain model scientific projects for

introducing technical machinery into countries where it is lacking; schemes for promoting the translation of important books into foreign languages; an international theater institute; information services in education, science, and culture, etc. Of course, several of these activities are already being carried out in other ways and by other organizations, but there are remarkable gaps in present intellectual exchanges, and there is certainly a great deal which Unesco should be able to do.

Dr. Julian Huxley, the newly appointed Director General of Unesco, has been criticized for putting forward his own evolutionary philosophy as the philosophy of Unesco. Whether or not one feels that evolutionism is too scientific a view for an organization which should include all the creeds of all the nations of the world, it is simple and useful to regard Unesco itself as a phase in the evolution of a modern international society.

The world (let us for this purpose assume) is evolving towards a phase of world government. However, world government, when it is achieved, probably will not resemble the centralized government by political parties which we mean by government today, thinking, as we do, of the examples of national government which we see around us. World government may rather be the development of many international organizations, working on parallel lines, which will create conditions of cooperation between nations wherever cooperation is helpful and necessary.

To take one example, the world seems to be on the verge of a new industrial revolution as the result of the harnessing of atomic energy. This is an extremely dramatic example, because the useful development of

STEPHEN SPENDER, the well-known English poet, is among those intellectuals who seek to play an active part in efforts to meet the problems that face the modern world; this sense of responsibility led him to Spain during the Civil War and it brings him today into all efforts to establish lines of communication and cooperation among men of thought throughout the world. In a recent book, *European Witness*, Mr. Spender describes a journey through post-war Europe and his efforts to make contact with the constructive intellectual life of Germany. In "The Intellectuals and Europe's Future," published in the January COMMENTARY, he reported on the Rencontres de Genève, a recent conference of European intellectuals. Here he examines what may prove to be the most important of all attempts at international cultural and intellectual cooperation: the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Mr. Spender has published volumes of poetry, fiction, and criticism; his latest book, *Poems of Dedication*, has just been issued by Random House. He was born in England in 1909 and educated at Oxford.

atomic energy is only possible if there is a great deal of cooperation between nations; and its destructive use would destroy, on the widest international scale, our civilization. Other examples of international organizations of world government now in development are those for the world distribution of food and for economic planning.

One can imagine that the history of these newly emerging social forms, written in five hundred years' time, might be very Huxleyan. It would be the history of vast organizations with strange names such as AMGOT, UNRRA, Unesco, crawling out of the cerebral dens of a Wellsian world brain, to grow, expand, become too vast, too bloated, and then be thrown aside by the evolutionary historic process and replaced by smaller, more efficient forms.

Yet looking ahead in this way, one may hazard the guess that world government will not mean centralized government from one place. It will mean rather the development of many organizations, many "internations," to increase the interrelatedness of nations for the purpose of world cooperation so as to ensure peace and enable each nation to take part in a development which is only possible now to each nation.

WHAT we are beginning to see already is that such international cooperation is not exclusively political, in the limited modern sense of politics. The nations of the world might today agree to differ on politics and yet find enormous fields of development in which they could cooperate: in rehabilitation, in economics, in scientific development, in education, in culture. To some extent, such a development is, indeed, taking place. International cooperation, which gets stuck in purely political controversy, yet moves forward in certain concrete tasks of rehabilitation, and also, to some extent, in cultural relations.

Of course, there are stages where all international relations become ideological, and therefore political. For example, the conflict between the ideas of the East and the West entered considerably into the General Con-

ference of Unesco at Paris in December 1946: and the absence of the Soviet Union from the membership of Unesco dramatizes this conflict. Yet it remains true that where, in political discussion, there would be perhaps a complete impasse, there is in Unesco an interchange of ideas between East and West. In this interchange lies hope of future understanding.

Thus Unesco is an experiment towards one of those international organizations which, in their perfected form, may exist in the world of the future as internations—links in a world where there are still separate nationalities, but where each nation uses these international organs for giving and receiving in the interests of the whole world.

We must regard the present stage of the world's history as a painful period of transition corresponding to the phase of the industrial revolution in England at the beginning of the 19th century. But it is a much wider revolution, affecting far larger populations, and coming after a period of even greater disaster than that which followed the Napoleonic Wars. The word *re-education*, which we have designated for the Germans, is really the label applying to our whole world: and the history lessons of lived history are taught with blood and tears.

Therefore I do not regard organizations such as Unesco as final, and I do not subscribe to such opinions as "If UN or Unesco fail, then we are lost and there can be no basis of world cooperation." Rather, I regard these organizations as experiments, perhaps to be replaced by other and better organizations, perhaps capable of learning their own lessons and transforming themselves.

IT is one thing to draw up a program for Unesco, such as that presented to the first Conference, and outlined above. It is quite another story to carry it out. What Unesco will be able to do depends on what Unesco is. As the General Conference in Paris proceeded, the nature of Unesco organization as it at present exists gradually emerged from the fog of discussion.

What first of all became apparent was that

the organization—or rather its Secretariat—situated at Unesco House in the Avenue Kléber, Paris (formerly the Hotel Majestic, then headquarters of the Gestapo, then headquarters of the United States Army, now headquarters of the Unesco Secretariat), is only an instrument, the organ of the national commissions of the nations belonging to Unesco. During the conference the delegates of these commissions formed committees which considered the programs for action put forward by the Secretariat. The tendency of the committees was to cut down each program to a minimum of projects—to those which were considered most important, which were realizable within a reasonable amount of time, and which were feasible within the limits of what Mr. Benton described as a “fledgling budget.”

It also became evident that it was not the wish of the delegates of the General Conference that the Secretariat of Unesco should set themselves up as arbiters of taste. They should carry out the instructions given to them by the Executive Committee of the delegates representing the countries belonging to Unesco. Thus—to take an example—it is not the function of the Section of Letters in the Secretariat of Unesco to select what books should be translated from the literature of each country. It is the task of the national commission of each country to select these books and then to use the machinery of the Section of Letters as an agency for translation into other languages.

The limitation of the budget to \$6,000,000, and the controversy about the election of the Director General, Dr. Julian Huxley, emphasized still further the fact that the Secretariat is not an independent organization, like a broadcasting company, but an instrument of the nations belonging to Unesco.

Therefore, the limits of Unesco will be in the first place not the limitations of the Secretariat itself, but those of the nations belonging to Unesco. And here we are brought face to face with the significance of the Soviet Union's refusal to join Unesco. For without the Soviet Union, Unesco is in danger of becoming or of being represented

as the cultural agency of a Western bloc directed against the East. Every effort has been made to induce the Soviet Union to come in, but this does not of course obviate the danger of Unesco becoming a bridge-head rather than a bridge between the East and the West as long as the Soviet Union remains outside.

ANOTHER problem which must be stated is that Unesco may become a vast international organism into which each nation projects all that is most academic, average, and anemic in its cultural life. The International Art Exhibition held at the Palais de Tokio in connection with the first General Conference of Unesco was a useful and alarming example of what happens when officials of many countries combine to produce an international cultural manifestation.

Apparently, the officials in each country of the world agree that every interest and organization in the country must be represented. They consult all the art organizations and get each to select works by its members. The result is a universal slick average-ness amazing to the eye of the beholder. It is as though officialdom of the world had discovered hundreds of painters all capable of painting the same picture combining the qualities of a discreet academicism with a controlled awareness of the modern. In such an exhibition a surrealist fantasy, the portrait of a general, a still life, all have the air of being, after all, the same picture by one official artist.

The International Art Exhibition was, indeed, a minor catastrophe. Of course, this manifestation had no connection with the main tasks of the Secretariat, but nonetheless it is a warning that the Secretariat may be asked by the national commissions to handle literature and ideas as academic and feeble as the majority of these pictures.

I have explained that the Secretariat is simply the instrument of the national commissions. Nevertheless, it is the men and women working in Unesco House who will in fact be responsible for the success or failure of Unesco. The Executive Commit-

tee can, of course, do nothing without the instrumentality of the Secretariat: not only this, but there is as yet no established machinery and routine for carrying out the projects of the Preparatory Commission. The Secretariat, having suggested these projects, now has to create them in action. The way in which they will be realized depends on the capacity and the human quality of the personnel who are busy with them. A number of projects have been indicated, but now the whole machinery for carrying out these tasks—and, indeed, the tasks themselves—must be invented. Although it is almost inevitable that there will be a certain academism about the translations, the exchanges, the lectures, the conferences organized by Unesco, these things will depend greatly on the spirit of the Secretariat itself.

I can illustrate this argument by saying that although Unesco on the official level represents the national commissions, one must never forget that if it is to be a living organization, it must also represent the intellectual life of the world. It must represent not just official committees, but also the scientists, the philosophers, the educationalists, the musicians, the artists, and the poets of all the countries of the world. Dr. William G. Carr, member of the United States National Commission for Unesco, in an interesting lecture in Paris during the Mois de l'Unesco (or "Unesco Month"), said that if Unesco did not represent in a direct and personal way the aspirations towards better teaching of the small and unknown school-teacher of a Midwestern town in the United States, it would have failed. It is equally true that if it does not interest in a direct way men such as Picasso and Casals and Eluard, Eliot and Auden, Henry Moore and Benjamin Britten (to name quite at random a few artists who have shown their interest in public affairs), as well as the foremost scientists and philosophers of the world, it will have failed.

HERE again, we are brought back to the problems of the Secretariat. For it is not to the national committees that the in-

tellectuals of the world will look, but to the heads of sections in Unesco House. During the General Conference in Paris it became evident already that for Julian Huxley to be Director General of Unesco meant a great deal to the intellectuals of France; but for him to resign and become a member of the Executive Committee of Delegates of National Commissions would have meant little or nothing. Some Paris editors of literary reviews met me to explain that if there was no member of the Secretariat whom they respected as having an international position in the world of letters, they would take no interest in, and expect nothing from, Unesco.

The personnel of the Secretariat is of great importance, because in so far as intellectual life is already to a great extent international, the intellectuals of the separate countries will look not only to their national commissions, but also—and perhaps far more—to the international Secretariat. It is important therefore that men of real distinction, and not place-hunters or people chosen by the academy-choosing methods of most national commissions, should be represented in the highest posts of Unesco.

AT THE same time I have to admit that the conditions of work in the Secretariat are unfavorable to anyone with serious intellectual work of his own. J. B. Priestley, on his return from the General Conference, said over the BBC that the very thought of the atmosphere of Unesco House gave him a headache. The trouble with such an international organization, with its committees, its meetings of national commissions, its moving about from one center of the world to another for the General Conference, its photographers, its intrigues, etc., etc., is that it degenerates rapidly into a kind of journalists' paradise. One should not accept such a degeneration as inevitable, for it would in fact mean that nearly everyone who set any value on his own individual development, on his own research or creative work, would leave or be driven out, to be replaced by officials, journalists, and administrators.

The conditions of work of the new international organizations which are springing up are worthy of study, and as far as I know they have not been studied at all. Everyone seems to be surprised when international organizations develop all the symptoms of being international rackets. Yet when one considers the conditions under which the staffs of UNRRA, UN, Unesco, etc., work it seems almost inevitable that they should be rackets. Many of the most serious people resign or are driven out. Meanwhile the temptations offered to adventurers, amateurs, and political failures to press for jobs in these organizations (if such people need tempting) are considerable. Before the war certain English people used to live abroad to avoid income tax. Now they have the opportunity of joining one of the new international organizations.

Yet Unesco must be filled with men and women with a sense of vocation and of mission. Every means should be studied for producing an atmosphere in which concentration, attention, and seriousness are possible among the staff of the Secretariat. It is more important that the heads of sections should live in conditions where they can carry out their work and retain their own individuality than that they should travel about all over the world like journalists. Everything should be done to combat the centrifugal tendencies of an international organization and to create a center, without, on the other hand, that center leading to over-centralization.

Ultimately, it seems to me that the most difficult task of all for Unesco is the creating of the right conditions under which the staff of the Secretariat can carry out its work. It seems also to be the problem of which most people connected with Unesco show the least awareness.

THE work of Unesco is only now beginning. In a year's time, it will still be too early to be either optimistic or pessimistic about Unesco. Its success depends, though, on whether four conditions are satisfied within the next two or three years.

First: it depends on the national commissions, of which the organization itself is only the instrument. When the nations of the world are prepared to spend in one year on educational, cultural, and scientific relations what they spend in one week on war or the preparation for war, Unesco will have a strong enough financial backing to achieve quite ambitious projects. It is up to the governments of the world to see, also, that Unesco does not become an instrument of rivalry between the ideologies of East and West.

Second: it is essential that within two years Unesco should have achieved several limited but concrete successes in carrying out projects large enough to impress a world public.

Third: it is essential that the Secretariat should contain at least a dozen men of first-rate ability and with a sense of the mission of Unesco who will create confidence in an organization that may very well be regarded either with envy or disgust as a bureaucratic racket.

Fourth and last: it is essential that Unesco should be felt not only by governments but by the intellectuals of the world to be an organization which represents what they consider the highest and best in their intellectual activities, and that it does not lapse into abstract researches or sterile academicism.

The organizers at the center of Unesco must be vigilant and inspired to achieve these four conditions without which Unesco will fail.

NO GRAPES, NO WRATH

A Story

HANS ADLER

ISAAC NEDINSKY began to help his father on the family's little mud-farm in Poland when he was fifteen years old. For many years he worked hard in the fields, but at times he would sneak off and stay away from work for hours. When he caught him, his father would slap him mercilessly; in fact, his father was kind of a brute, all right.

Nevertheless, Isaac was deeply dejected one morning at the end of the first great war when his father was shot in the head by the fuddled sweetheart of a revolutionary mail-clerk. That day the place swarmed with staggering people, wild and foolish from the effects of drink, and that's why Isaac didn't dare to pick up his father and bury him. Neither did Isaac dare to leave the woods where he was hiding.

Coward that he was, he waited five full days before he ventured to return to what was left of his father's house. His mother and his two sisters were gone. The sweetheart of the revolutionary mail-clerk, now sobered up, with Isaac's mother's brooch pinned on her blouse, advised him to go away quickly before something could happen.

Isaac went away. He turned toward Germany. It was no easy journey. For days he cowered in ditches hiding from roving bands. There were times when he ate grass

and plain earth; there were times when he was desperate enough to gnaw on his socks.

After two months in Germany, Isaac landed a job as an office janitor. He was not disliked, being rather conscientious in the pursuance of his humble work. After two years he married Rachel, who was not pretty, not very smart; as a matter of fact, Rachel was a downright dumb and bad woman indeed. The son from the marriage, however, was exceptionally handsome and bright.

Yes, David was his father's joy. Thus, Isaac one day was greatly angered at seeing Erna, the tall German secretary, kicking David. What had happened? David, playfully, had grasped Erna's leg, causing a run in her stocking. That was all. Well, Isaac was quite exasperated and raised his voice and his hand. That he shouldn't have done. Erna shouted for help. Two young fellows appeared and bounced at Isaac. Isaac, this time, bounced back energetically and, surprised at his own strength, walloped the two fellows good and hard.

Next evening, however, he walloped nobody when he was suddenly attacked by four men in the street and beaten unconscious.

When he left the hospital four months later he could not find his bad wife Rachel and there was no trace of David, his son. Isaac looked for them long and in vain. Then there was a change of government in the country and Isaac, not a very courageous man, left in a hurry.

In Austria, surprisingly enough, Isaac found work quickly as a watchman in a great freight-yard. There he worked somehow listlessly, day in, day out. There he was not liked at all and his colleagues got pretty tired of listening to his endless mournful tales about Rachel and David. His colleagues, furthermore, neither relished nor

HANS ADLER, after five years of service with the United States Army, worked for military government as local editor for Radio Frankfurt. His report on the postwar German scene, "Berlin Apartment House," appeared in the May 1946 COMMENTARY. Before the war Mr. Adler, who came to this country from Austria in 1938, was on the staff of the Anti-Defamation League in Chicago. He is now at work on a book, *Bologna to Auschwitz, 1647-1947*, "recording three centuries of Jewish setbacks." He was born in Vienna in 1910.

believed his tall story about the fuddled sweetheart of the revolutionary mail-clerk who had shot his father. And, in fact, Isaac told that story much too often.

His meager savings were invested in futile searches for his wife and child. He was fired one Thursday around five o'clock in the afternoon, but that didn't matter much as the government in this particular country changed two hours later anyway. So Isaac, no hero as ever, fled northward this time, to Czechoslovakia.

IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA he found work immediately. Again he had the care of a small office building, but this was a much friendlier place—he was better paid, it was nicer all around, and the people even seemed to mind less when he told what they thought to be “triste little fibs.”

All the time Isaac longed bitterly for his son. He visualized him growing up—handsome, virile, happy. And new visions stubbornly appeared before his mind: the brooch of his poor mother, the pale face of his little sister who had had the measles three times in a row. . . . Where, great God, were they all? His mother? His sisters? David, his son? Rachel, his wife?

One day his modest popularity sank swiftly. He was called to help at an extra big mailing and, for hours, he wetted the gummed parts of sharp envelopes with his lips. All office workers pitched in folding letters, stuffing them into envelopes. Yes, Isaac tried to combat his notion at first, but the longer he looked at the girl standing in front of him across the table, the more he seemed to recognize how similar she looked to Erna, the tall German secretary who had so cruelly kicked his son. Isaac stared at her. He couldn't help it. He became more and more absent-minded. He gave insolent answers to people who wanted to know what had got into him.

His declining popularity—little did it matter. There came a change in the government of this country and this time it was not a more or less quiet, smooth change at all. Isaac fled faster than ever—to Poland. The

escape was not easy, though. Wherever he went, he encountered German soldiers. Again he hid for days. He tore turnips out of the soil, he ate a dead sparrow raw.

IN POLAND no janitor job nor any other job waited for him. He never told his stories any more. He got sick. Isaac contracted what appeared a very silly sickness—a hiccough, a ridiculous hiccough that began as a succession of little spasmodic gulps and soon changed into sustained attacks of a rasping cough that lasted for hours. People in the municipal kitchen were greatly annoyed at all that noise.

Isaac's malady lasted for long months. He grew very weak. He held countless odd jobs but his hiccough always got him fired before he could serve a single week. Even while he slept, his lungs and his throat jerked convulsively and continuously; his comrades in the poorhouse barracks were greatly annoyed.

Isaac's hiccough abated a little at a time when the official government decided to leave Poland in a hurry. Isaac himself managed to escape to Hungary. Naturally, this time he had not the ghost of a chance to find a janitor's job; in fact, he had hardly been in the country for two days when he was shipped to Austria.

In Austria the hiccoughs returned and all his haunting visions. He had no time to look for work because again he was sent back to Hungary, thrown into a Danube barge, and left on the river with about seventy fellow-men. On the barge Isaac ate wood splinters and moss scraped from the logs that held the barge together. He hardly noticed that two men went crazy and that an elderly couple went overboard. His hiccoughs subsided. In the pocket of the girl who quietly died at his side he found a small chocolate bar.

Isaac stayed in Rumania for six weeks only. A policeman who questioned him one day had but little understanding for relapsing hiccoughs and was convinced that this Isaac here was trying to poke fun at him. So the policeman smashed into Isaac's nose until he felt bone and cartilage give way.

Isaac looked rough now with his battered

face. On his way to Italy, he occasionally thought of suicide but he knew that he did not have the courage to end his life. Isaac felt old, very old and worn. Once arrived, he found a strange government in the land with strange new ways, and it didn't take him long to realize that this government just wasn't cut out to lose any love on him. It could happen now that Isaac at night wept silently like a beaten child.

And on his way to France, this unmanly business of crying became quite a habit with him indeed. This man hardly over fifty, so many of his companions felt, should have strength enough to pull himself together. Well, Isaac quite often lacked that strength.

When the government was so painfully changed in France, Isaac had no chance to vanish as he had so often done before whenever a government changed. But the Germans who rounded him up did not treat him too badly. Somehow, and strangely enough, they never suspected that this decrepit-looking individual was a Jew. Some weird character, some small-time boxer taken to drink, they thought. Yet he was sent to Poland anyway. There, in a sawmill, for more than three years, Isaac stacked boards that—he was smilingly told—were destined for a special camp. His fellow workers whispered incredible stories about that special camp. To his German guard he told endless yarns about his mother's brooch stolen by a Bolshevik harlot, and he became quite liked as he always stressed the Bolshevik association of his father's murderer. Why, even when he insanely assured his German guard that he, Isaac, was a Jew, his revelation was received as a splendid joke and he became even more popular. When at last, late in 1945, the German guard found out that Isaac actually was a Jew, he heavily pummeled his face, in which this time nose and cartilage presented no more obstacles.

ISAAC survived the second great war. He came back to Czechoslovakia where the government had changed again, and he came to Austria that now had no particular gov-

ernment of her own. Isaac came back to a Germany defeated, suspicious, cold—the government extinct.

In Bremen, Isaac, agelessly old, agelessly worn, stepped on a boat and crossed the ocean. Not once during the entire voyage did he mention his mother's brooch or Rachel or David, his son.

At Staten Island, he learned to spell and to pronounce correctly the name of the friendly rabbi who had made possible his transfer from the old, very old world to the new, or at least newer, one.

Arriving at his destination, a Midwestern town, Isaac, miraculously, was still energetic enough every day to tie his shoelaces, to put on his shirt and coat, to walk, to move his jaws in order to eat. Miraculously, he was able to study the new language at a night school for recent refugees, not doing badly. One evening, the teacher, a young wholesome woman, enthusiastic but a bit inexperienced, decidedly overrated the capacities of her pupils. Tired of the routine of spelling and pronouncing exercises, she began to introduce a new progressive teaching method by reading and explaining chosen excerpts from good books. This evening, she told her pupils about a book called *The Grapes of Wrath*, the sad story of Oklahoma farmers who lose their land, wander, suffer, and endure. The pupils could not follow her too well except when she came to the following simple passage:

"This here is William James Joad, dyed of a stroke, old, old man. His folks buried him becaws they got no money to pay for the funerls. Nobody kilt him. Just a stroke and he dyed."

Isaac at this point couldn't help thinking of his father. The room was stuffy. He coughed and, suddenly, his hiccoughs returned. As Isaac seemed unable to check the rapid contractions of his poor windpipe, some diverted pupils grinned, some laughed. The teacher was visibly irritated, thinking the disturbance intentional. She looked hard at Isaac and said coldly: "Why, Mr. Nedinsky . . . I must say . . . really!"

FROM MENDELSSOHN TO KAFKA

The Jewish Man of Letters in Germany

HEINZ POLITZER

IN 1772, Issachar Falkensohn Behr published his *Poems of a Polish Jew* in the German language in Mitau and Leipzig. Goethe took the occasion to state what his generation expected from the Jews, still far from feeling at home in Germany.

"We must say first of all that the title of these pages made a very favorable impression on us. A fiery spirit, we thought, has suddenly entered our world, a sensitive nature grown to independent manhood under a rude and foreign sky. What sort of feelings stir in this man to whom everything is new, what will he try to do? How many things will astonish him . . . ? Where we are bored, he discovers sources of delight. . . . On the other hand, he finds hundreds of things insupportable that seem excellent to us. Enough—he finds what he is not looking for and looks for what he cannot find. Candid songs will tell us what he thinks and feels about society, friends, girls; and if he says nothing new, everything will at least be given a new aspect. That is what we hoped, but we reached out and touched—nothing.

"It is extremely praiseworthy for a Polish Jew to give up business in order to learn

German, to polish verses and devote himself to the Muses. But if he can do no more than a Christian *étudiant en belles lettres*, then he does wrong, we think, to make a fuss about being a Jew. . . .

" . . . nor have we said anything further about his odes. What more is there to say? Mediocrity detestable to the gods and men alike. We hope to meet him again on the road along which we pursue our ideal, and to find him more inspired this time."

These words of Goethe marked a turning point in the German-Jewish relationship. From then on the Jew was no longer considered an object of intellectual-political tutelage, as in the period of the Enlightenment, but an active force in Germany's intellectual development. Goethe's views were shared by the progressive elements of his circle. " . . . the Jewish nation promises a great deal if it once awakens," wrote a man named Boie to the writer Knebel in 1771. Goethe's criticism was not a mere personal utterance but the clear formulation of what the heirs of the German Enlightenment expected of the half-emancipated Jews. They believed they had found the Jews in a deep lethargy, and they were not sure whether the Jews still slept or were already dead. If it were death, Germany's own history would have to bear much of the guilt. Thus, as the barely awakened sleeper arose and made his first clumsy attempts to feel out the reality around him, the full weight of German culture, which had needed centuries of patient growth for its development, was thrust upon him all at once.

MOSES MENDELSSOHN had promised too much. He was more conspicuous as a personality than as an author; his strength lay in his determination to master and de-

HEINZ POLITZER was born in Vienna in 1910 and lived in Vienna and Prague as a free-lance writer until the time of the Anschluss. In 1938 he emigrated to Palestine, where he lives at present. Dr. Politzer was co-editor with Max Brod of the first five volumes of Franz Kafka's *Collected Works*, recently republished in this country, and in 1937 he published a book of poetry, *Fenster vor dem Firmament* ("Window on the Firmament"). At the present time, he is completing a book on the Jewish contribution to German literature, which will embody a fuller discussion of many of the ideas set forth here. This article has been translated by Martin Greenberg.

fend what German culture had given him, and he succeeded in weakening the mystical and prophetic force of the Jewish faith to the point where Jews, following the path of Reason, discovered in Germany a new promised land, which they could enter free of inhibition and reproach of conscience.

Germany's newly enlightened conscience was soothed by the admission into its world of an isolated Jewish representative, and the mild and decorous behavior of this specimen gave it additional satisfaction. But behind Mendelssohn waited those whom he represented, an unformed and unmannerly crowd with energies still dammed up behind the walls of the ghetto.

Mendelssohn innocently deceived the Germans by leading them to expect that what he had done was not exceptional and could be repeated successfully by the rest of the Jews without further preliminary. And with the best of faith he seduced the Jews into following him. Could not his own good fortune be made theirs? Was he not just a simple and ordinary person from their midst?

But he was an exception. German Jewry was not given the time it needed to take root in its new freedom, to absorb the sap of the new culture and grow patiently until it could bear good fruit. Germany was impatient. Something was asked in return for every bit of patience it granted the Jews, immediate repayment was demanded for everything that German culture had to give.

Goethe did not stop to think that his Polish Jew was the latter-day descendant of a people that had given the world the Scriptures, which his own hero, Faust, was to attempt to translate into German. He did not bother to ask whether a spark of that truth from which his own Christian faith was derived still glimmered beneath the ashes, or to investigate the singular persistence of a national life notable at least for having survived centuries of dispersion and oppression; he did not try to find in the stunted figure of a Jew only recently escaped from the ghetto the traces of all those cultures that Judaism had survived and, as often as not, enriched essentially.

The Germans did not ask of the Jews devotion, but self-renunciation; not *sympiosis*, but assimilation; not a real partnership of communities, men, and minds, but the voluntary subordination of one group to the other.

If the Jews were to enrich German culture, they could do so only by an exertion of their creative energies that would overcome the mediocrity Goethe censured; they could do so only by allying their native abilities with those of the Germans in fraternal union. But from the first they were denied any recognition of their native abilities. For a long time it was easier for the sycophantic and mediocre productions of Jewish writers to gain acceptance in Germany, than for those few fragments contributed by "unredeemed" Judaism, easily discernible where Jewish writing offered some originality.

GOETHE'S wish was fulfilled. His next and "more inspired" meeting with a Jew was with Heinrich Heine, who crossed the Privy Councilor's threshold October 1, 1824. But now it was the Jew's very lack of "detestable mediocrity" that spoiled the meeting.

Heine and his generation had chosen the extraordinary without ever having assimilated the commonplace. The aged Goethe recognized and condemned this extremism—not, however, as a specifically Jewish fault, but as what he called the "sickness" of the new age. The progressive younger generation, both German and German-Jewish, had on the other hand welcomed this extremism as something characteristically modern that the age required.

Heine had quickly reached the heights of the literary profession. But his was not a greatness that braved the world, saying: accept me or founder on me! His defiance was not Promethean. He too had written a "Doctor Faust," but it was described by him as a dance-poem (*Tanzpoem*) instead of a tragedy. His attitude—strange, charming, and dangerously modern—was one of heedlessness.

The power that distinguished the revolutionary epochs of German poetry is seldom

to be found in Heine's half-unrhymed stanzas and approximate rhymes. What is evident, rather, is the first clear sign of that hallmark of modernity, the dissolution of artistic form. And it was also the first seismic sign of that vast levelling that was to take place in European culture when the proletariat entered the history of the Continent, resulting in the final downfall of the middle class.

Though Heine worked hard to brush up his poems, his style is scarcely the result of conscious artistic purpose. On the contrary, it expresses itself in the almost infinite capacity to make the most of the single moment—and not the moment of which Goethe had conceived, an infinite drop of dew mirroring the eternity from whose heights it trickled—Heine's moment was an autonomous instant bursting up from the raging vortex of the present.

Heine the German Jew, unhindered by conventions, could not protect himself against a superfluity of momentary impressions; he was a poet of the isolated instant which demanded only that its dazzling surface be revealed. At the same time he was fascinated by the threadbare places in the cultural and social fabric around him, and it was at these that he aimed his thrusts, at the points of least resistance, trying to disintegrate the surrounding fabric as well. Only just before his death was he able to feel the breath of higher powers upon him, coming through the gaps in his work and his world.

It is no accident that Guillaume Apollinaire, one of the fathers of French surrealism, should have admired Heine's lyrics, for Heine's later verse anticipates that kind of poetry in which one idea or image fleetingly joins with another, where the mind is released from the discipline of reason and represented as it really is, with all its abysses. The German language had never really taken root in Heine, but here it ascends to the ether. The music of these stanzas is the consummate shaping of a consummate shapelessness. The uncertainty of the modern European mind shows first in Heine's verse.

This uncertainty, common to all Europe, consisted in the alienation of the spirit from

life. What made Nietzsche call Heine a secular figure and range him beside himself was the fact that Heine was the first to elevate *esprit*—and then the spirit itself—above reality, and having done this, to make music out of it. The contempt they both had for reality and the suffering they both experienced brought their minds together. It was the flight in *extremis* of thought and imagination from a society that had lost its center of gravity.

The need to be extraordinary forced Heine to become a European poet before becoming essentially a German poet. The goal was set too high, the time allowed for growth was too short, and Germany's political sphere was too restricted, for Heine to overcome the contradiction between his German and his Jewish natures. He did not break down the barriers between the two, he jumped over them. Before he had even found a place in the society of his age, he took a revolutionary stand against it.

He wrote in 1830: "As there are birds who can foretell the various natural revolutions—storms, floods, etc.—so there are men whose temperaments can foretell social revolutions, who suffer as a result of this from peculiar feelings of paralysis, bewilderment, and stagnation." The stranger sees the cracks in the walls more quickly than the settled inhabitant, whose eyes are dulled by familiarity. What entitles him to point out the damage is that he has knowledge of it in his blood. For he knows he will be first to be buried by the collapse of the house.

IN 1831, the year after the July revolution, Heine went to Paris. "Things have conspired to set me on the summit of the world—Paris!" He was no longer able to breathe in Germany. It was not only the social and political conditions of his country that stifled him—it was only too obvious that every poem he wrote in German evoked the German-Jewish contradiction in his conscience. So he tried a change of scene.

It was no use. He would have had to find a Europe no longer composed of national states, but only of the spirit. Heine and his

generation suffered from the servility, the false sentiments and blurred modes of thinking of their German surroundings. They longed for freedom, hilarity, and clarity, and fancied they would find them on the other side of the German-French border.

Yet, when they crossed that frontier they carried their German heritage along with them. French soil did not release them from their predilection for German "*Innigkeit*" (by no means subjectivity!), German musicality, and that deepness of feeling and thought which they had learned to admire in the despised homeland.

For the sake of their own peace they hoped to help build a Utopian Europe in which the French and German natures could at last unite, in which the introvert passiveness of the German poet could be reconciled with the French republican's active love of freedom, where reason could live in accord with feeling, and clarity with depth. But the obligation to achieve the extraordinary and the impossible still pursued them. And even if their dream had come true, if the barriers had fallen and Paris had emerged as the capital of a reconciled Europe, even then they would have had to detach their homeland from this Utopian super-state all over again, so that they could keep on hating Germany and running away from it, seeking it out and adoring it.

NO ONE suffered more from this contradiction than Ludwig Börne.

"When Byron's genius arrived on earth on its trip through the firmament, intending to spend the night here, it stopped off at my place first. But the house did not suit it at all, so it hurried on and turned in at the Hotel Byron. For many years after it was a source of pain and sorrow to me that I myself had attained too little and never gotten anywhere. But now it is all over with, I've forgotten it, and I live contentedly in my poverty."

He never forgot it. Goethe, comparing a Polish Jew with the Germans of his own circle, had arrogantly interfered with the natural process of development. But now

the Jew Börne compared himself with Byron: he accepted Goethe's challenge, and yet he knew he could never meet it; thus he made inevitable that self-hatred of which he sought to relieve himself in polemical writings.

Börne was born the year Moses Mendelssohn died, 1786. Frankfort, his native city, shut him up in a ghetto, and the walls of the ghetto remained for him a symbol of the frailty of all attempts to liberate the world by enlightenment and reason. He became a disciple of discord and frustration, which he called "struggle."

He made his literary debut as a fighter against ghetto walls when the breaches made in them by the Napoleonic wars were in danger of being closed again. Yet his father would not allow him to publish a pamphlet he then wrote. Afterwards he turned towards the theater—the first in a long line of German-Jewish authors who began as critics of the stage and ended as critics of society. Censorship frustrated his work. He hated and attacked Goethe, who seemed to him something like a German super-censor; but he admired the novelist Jean Paul for the democratic virtues that he himself partly injected into the ideal picture he made of Jean Paul. He had himself baptized, like Heine, "in order to help his Jewish brethren in their fight"; he too went to Paris, where he wrote his *Letters from Paris*, fascinating monologues of a reborn Hamlet. Finally he succumbed to the French priest Lamennais, who showed him a Church renewed on an evangelical and socialistic basis in which he could at last rest from his quixotic adventures.

What he had fought for was an empty conception of freedom. No matter how honestly he tried to be a man of the people and a friend of the downtrodden, he remained the generalized lover of humanity, the protagonist of an idea, who never shared in a real community life. The nightmare of his youth kept him forever from enjoying the relationship of one man to another.

As a politician he dreamt of realities, and his dreams oscillated between the ghetto and the open world, making it all the easier for

his opponents to refute him: emphasizing his Jewishness, the German bourgeoisie served notice that this revolutionary had nothing to do with them and that his claims on German history were not binding.

Because he oscillated between the extremes of the ghetto and the open world he was reproached for his Jewishness, and because he was reproached for his Jewishness he was driven to further extremes. He became a political *littérateur*, the first of his kind in Germany: a commissar of human rights with the airs of a prophet. Full of arrogance and full of doubt as he was, *impatience* drove him beyond the limits of the reality about which he talked so much, beyond even the future for which he claimed to be preparing. Sensing the emptiness of his own words, his anger turned all the more violently against life, against people, and against himself.

This impatience came not only from that persistent inner image of the ghetto; it came also from his uneasiness at being exposed to historical processes that he did not understand but that he felt it necessary to master in order to survive in Germany. He reflects the sickness of a world that has lost the connections between individual and community, idea and realization. In an address on Jean Paul, he applied to the epigones of that writer words that apply equally to himself: "They are in this place and in that but the abyss remains in between; they were unable to span the gaps of existence."

Börne's impatience was the impatience of modern man, as Heine's heedlessness was the heedlessness of modern man. Being Jews, they were the first to succumb to the universal malady. They helped spread the sickness of rootlessness—of alienation. But they were carriers of the disease, not its cause.

The history of the German-Jewish association had to write itself almost to its end before a man appeared of the same blood as Heine's and Börne's—but of an entirely different spirit—who was able to see that the things that had spoiled their achievement were the age-old weaknesses of the human character, and at the same time the special stigmata of modern man. There is an aphor-

ism by Franz Kafka: "There are two cardinal sins that afflict man, and from these all the others are derived: impatience and heedlessness. Because of impatience, man was driven out of paradise; because of heedlessness, he never returned. However, there is probably only one cardinal sin: impatience. Because of impatience, man was driven out; on account of impatience, man never returned."

THE golden age of German-Jewish literature—beginning around the 80's of the last century and lasting until Hitler—constitutes an undivided effort to meet Goethe's demand and realize the unrealizable. Heine and Börne had attained the extraordinary; now it was a question of passing from the extraordinary to the ordinary without depreciating the value of what had already been accomplished.

Against all natural laws, German Jewry grew from the periphery towards the center. The problem was no longer to shine with Heine's outstanding brilliance or battle with Börne's exorbitant *éclat*; now the problem was to set one's own existence in order and to present this order in the right way. And success could come only when each individual set his whole being to the task, when literature became neither a game nor a battle but the expression of existence—that is, when it became poetry.

Since there were German Jews who felt obliged to become aware of their own being, it is not surprising that they made a simultaneous discovery of their German and their Jewish origins. Thus while Jewish assimilation seemed to be advancing during these years and seemed to fulfill itself with ever greater distinction in society, politics, and culture, Jewish self-consciousness and Jewish independence, supported by social, political, and cultural insights and visions, were achieving a wholly new importance. Caught between an assimilation in process of consummation and the contrary impulses inevitably resulting from this, German-Jewish literature evolved into a true symbiosis.

The number of individuals representing

German-Jewish literature in the fifty years of its flowering is impressive. There are the revolutionary and the conservative; the psychologist and the man of religion; the patriot and the nihilist; the enthusiast and the great hater; the etherealist and the materialist; the lover of detail and the lover of the soaring and the general; the fanatic of truth and the master of subterfuge; the coffee-house *littérateur* and the worshipper of nature; the sentimentalist and the epigrammatist; the friend of the world and the world-weary—the good German and the good Jew. And each embodied a whole complex of contradictions that drove him forward, that gave him his particular theme, his particular tone, his particular kind of illumination.

There were those indeed who refused to admit the contradiction that constituted their nature and who fled from their Jewishness in order to surrender fully to the German. If they were great enough, they managed the perfect lie, like the poet Rudolf Borchardt, or ended up in suicide, like the philosopher Otto Weininger. If they were lesser men they exhausted themselves and fell into passivity. For the problem and the distinction of German Jewry lay in the fact that two sources fed its spirit.

GERMAN-JEWISH literature remained urban and European even after its legitimization in Germany. Three principal centers were responsible for the variety of its inflections: Berlin, Vienna, and Prague. These cities, above all, admitted their Jews to intimacy, and the Jews responded by creating in their image and enriching it. In Berlin, a civilizing, progressive, practical mood prevailed; in Vienna, an introspective, psychological, musical mood; in Prague, a mystical-revolutionary mood.

While Börne entered German civilization directly from the ghetto, and Heine from the petty bourgeoisie, German-Jewish writers were now often the grandsons or sons of Jews living in the open country (*Landjuden*); many of them spent their childhoods there and came to know the countryside and its people at the source. This changed their

relationship to the language, the real material of their art. They learned to look at things and know them before writing about them. The word-play of Heine and Börne was succeeded by word-visions that resulted from a fresh and serious mode of observation.

But in spite of their real knowledge of Germany, these writers recognized the estrangement between themselves and the people among whom they moved and to whose culture they contributed, and it was this very estrangement that permitted them to see more deeply than their neighbors. They had penetrated as far as they could into German culture, and the irreducible residue of insecurity that remained for them gave them the power to perceive the insecurities of those around them, as the sick man sees the first ominous flush in the countenance of the healthy. They saw that the Germans themselves were estranged from the land they called their own. "*Fremde sind wir auf der Erde alle, und es stirbt, womit wir uns verbinden.*" (We are all strangers on earth, and what tied us together is dying.) They saw the crisis first, they suffered from it first, and they had already rallied their knowledge of themselves and their origins, aiming at a new approach to their religion or at a thoroughly un-German irony, at a time when the Gentiles themselves had just begun to open their eyes.

The more eagerly German-Jewish literature drew close to the Germans, the greater became its independence and estrangement. The more authentic its contribution, the more Jewish it became. And the more Jewish it became, the greater its weight in German culture grew, until German literary achievement could not be measured without considering the German-Jewish accomplishment that was so large a part of it.

And in exile, ironically, the German Jews were able to preserve the purity and vitality of the German language when the real German language had been stifled inside Germany, and the official spokesmen of the new regime expressed themselves in a criminal slang that any German Jew would have refused to call German.

IN THE galaxy of German-Jewish literature before 1933—so resplendent that no single glance can take it in—one light gleams more brightly than the rest, a light at once the purest and the most remote.

For Franz Kafka, to be a German and a Jew was no longer a problem, but existence itself. It was a strange existence, to be sure, but it was no longer racked and driven by its contradictions: it was composed of the contradictions themselves, it accepted and encompassed them.

Kafka was born in Prague and never left it for any long period of time until the last years of his life. In Prague he was in contact with a Germanism almost surrounded by the Slavic world and no longer properly supported by the density of the German mass. The Germans in Prague had fallen into virtually the same condition of ostracism as the Jews, and the German Jews in Prague were a minority within a minority.

Prague's Jewish community always preserved the character of a ghetto. The two salient features of ghetto life—intimate and often odious cohabitation and a matter-of-course connection between the present, the past, and the pre-past—were sublimated in Kafka's work. He no longer tried to break the double ring of Judaism and Germanism. Strength, not weakness, made him abandon the attempt: the strength of one who bears his fate willingly, without calculation or remonstrance, one for whom flight would be the only defeat.

Kafka became a European figure, but in his case it was not because Jewishness had driven him out of Germany towards a fantastical and colorless Europe in which all boundaries had been erased. In the place where he was, in Prague, touching both East and West and living in a community where Jewish life was always discernible beneath the German, he accepted both the Jewish and the German with a thoroughness that made him the absolute figure of modern man.

He too was a victim of the European crisis, but he became more than merely its product. He recognized the crisis and recognized its religious origin; he expressed the

crisis and exorcised it with such clarity and courage as had not been exhibited by anyone else from the time of the Protestant Kierkegaard to the time of the Jew Martin Buber. And he confronted the crisis, moreover, not only as visionary and thinker, but as artist, poet, and creator.

Impatience and heedlessness—which he had called the cardinal sins of mankind—are alien to him. Every sentence he wrote was wrung out of his own life with an extreme of toil and responsibility. He stands behind every word, and his words are as sharp and clear as crystal, so clear that you imagine you are gazing into bottomless depths. His German, not uncolored by the idiom of Prague, has a purity, sureness, and economy, an almost cruel serenity, such as no other writing has ever exhibited.

He found—as Goethe had expected—"what he was not looking for": a world in decline. This decline consisted not only in the collapse of Central European culture (which Kafka, who died in 1924, was nevertheless able to see approaching), nor did it consist exclusively in the catastrophe that befell German Jewry (which Kafka foresaw here and there in his work with startling exactitude of detail): it consisted in *man's consciousness of having lost all connection with the authorities that ruled his life*.

Kafka describes an endless game of hide-and-seek between man and the authorities, a game that appears so inexorable and inescapable because the players turn to one another only distorted faces and are never able to recognize one another because of their distortion. If man alone bore the guilt for the distortion, then Kafka's work would be theology. If the blame were placed upon the distorted powers of life, then it would be psychology or sociology or metaphysics. But Kafka's is a work of poetry: he accuses no one; he describes wherein the distortion consists, and in describing it and apportioning the responsibility equally between the world of man and the world beyond man (i.e., the apparatus and the forms within which we live), he awakens hope of that hour when man and the world, freed from

the marks of deformity, may be able freely to confront one another again.

KAFKA'S work is born of despair. Hope is expressly excluded for the man writing and for the man he portrays: "Infinite hope, but not for us."

His work is colorless—black, white, and gray are its basic tones. Things happen that are at once horrible and prosaic: a man looks for a night's lodging; this requires the approval of the authorities; he tries to force his way to the authorities, and when this is unsuccessful he tries to slip through to them; he uses up his strength to no avail; approval comes at the moment when he dies of exhaustion. Or: a man is summoned before a court of justice; he is ignorant of the charge, and his crime consists apparently in the fact that he has forgotten it; he pursues the court, he pursues the lost memory of his crime; he finds—not the reason for the verdict, but death. Or: a man arrives before a gate; the gatekeeper refuses to admit him; he waits there to the last; then the watchman opens the door—it had been reserved all along for this visitor and for him alone. All these events take place out of time and space. Immemorial dreams appear, primeval shapes reveal themselves behind everyday masks. Delay, frustration, and refusal are so great an element in Kafka's world that his heroes often welcome death, committing a kind of suicide by the hands of others.

His work abounds in horrors and yet it is not horrifying. Layer after layer of unfathomable depth is exposed to the view—slowly, carefully, almost guardedly, as mist rises from a bottomless landscape. There is no light, yet shadows and phantoms reveal a beauty of their own, the beauty of a world before daybreak.

Even Kafka's characters meet the incomprehensible with an irony that renders them unconquerable to the end, and which reminds one of the smile one finds in the eyes of children, knowing and unknowing at once.

Kafka's three great novels were left in

fragmentary form, but they seem constructed with a lofty fitness, like the foundation walls of an age-old palace that silently encloses ineffable destinies and whose completed roof is the sky arching over it. The fragmentariness of the novels only intensifies their beauty; even as fragments they are symbolical of their subject: the breakdown of a life that has lost its connection with the authorities, with the powers that hem in and rule over it. Beauty, however, is only another form of the hope that Kafka says exists—"but not for us." And without some friendly sympathy on the part of the higher powers—who are represented in these books as hopelessly estranged and hostile—beauty could never have entered Kafka's work. For the authorities—be it father, judge, master of the castle, or the one who hides himself behind the last of the closed gates—seem to have blessed the poet in the end by permitting him to reveal their cruelty in the gentle irony of a new classic style.

GERMAN-JEWISH literature was unable to meet Goethe's paradoxical demand except by a paradox. It became German but remained foreign. In discovering its Jewish nature, it united itself so closely with the German that the union could be dissolved at last only by physical force.

German Jews enriched German culture, but not so much by "conveying their thoughts in candid songs" as by snatching the Germans from the "habitual indifference" of their conscience. They made Germans—and our age—conscious of the modern crisis. This was their task, this was the message they were sent forth to proclaim.

But Judaism, with whatever nation it may join in a common life and for whatever end, carries still another message from that home of the spirit from which it sprang—and this message is entirely its own. Again it is Franz Kafka who proclaims it: "To have faith means: liberating the indestructible in oneself, or, more accurately, liberating oneself, or, more accurately, being indestructible, or, more accurately, being."

BUDGET OF A FISH FACTORY

The Cost of Cooperative Living in Palestine

MEYER LEVIN

ON FLAT lands bordering the Huleh swamp, at the northern end of Palestine, the kibbutz Cfar Blum is being built by a collective group known as the Anglo-Balts. About fifty young Americans are now in this group, which is basically composed of English-speaking pioneers from Great Britain, Canada, South Africa, Australia, and America, plus a section of immigrants from the Baltic states.

The Anglo-Balts named their commune after the French socialist, Léon Blum, at the time when he was thought to be dead. (He has since expressed a very lively interest in the settlement and hopes to visit it. The side road to Cfar Blum crosses fields to which hundreds of Arabs laid claim, so that each family claiming each tiny segment had to be paid off before the road could be built. Along the way are government signs pronouncing this a 100 per cent malarial area, with "Do Not Camp Here" warnings.

During the early years of the settlement, all but one of the comrades suffered from malaria; winter and summer, about half of them were down with the disease, in rotating attacks. Nevertheless they managed to dig about ten miles of swamp-drainage canals, and also several long rectangular fish-breed-

ing ponds that are their best source of income. Then they decided to put up their housing. The Baltics wanted to do the housing gradually, but the American influence won out, and they did the entire job at a single stroke, in one year.

The buildings were being finished last year; they were constructed with double entrances and outside screening, and as a result of this new housing and an intensive DDT campaign throughout the neighboring Arab villages, there was not a single case of malaria this year.

TACKED up in the dining hall of Cfar Blum, next to the daily copy of *Davar*, was a sheet of paper with columns of figures: the budget for the year. One afternoon when the dining-hall was empty, except for a few mothers who had time off and were knitting, I had the budget explained to me by Belle Eisenberg, who was once a bookkeeper in New York.

It occurred to me as I looked down the columns of figures that for the outside world there could be no better way of understanding the structure and life of a kibbutz than by pondering the items on the budget line by line—so I copied it off.

Cfar Blum's budget for 1946 was based on a population of 250, including eighty children. The settlers had allowed for their natural increase, but had not allowed for all the immigrants and newcomers who came to the commune during the year, raising its population to 350 by 1947, so that the budget was heavily strained by year's end.

The total estimated income was around \$215,000, or less than a thousand dollars a year per person—on the original population figure. It must be remembered, of course, that this is farm economy. But that does not

MEYER LEVIN, the novelist, here uses the dollars-and-cents figures of an actual budget to make us see the scale of human relationships and values of a Palestine commune, that unique form of cooperative living together and working together which many think a highly valuable contribution toward the solution of the problem of collective production within the framework of democratic freedom. Mr. Levin's novels include *Yehuda*, *The Old Bunch*, and *Frankie and Johnny*. Mr. Levin has just returned to this country after his latest visit to Palestine, bringing with him a full-length movie of which he was co-producer.

mean that the living-scale is augmented by "all sorts of extra things from the farm." The cost of the settlement's own products consumed by the kibbutz is added into the budget.

Food comes to about seventy cents per person per day, even on the farm. There is plenty of food, but nothing very fancy. There's an egg for breakfast or supper, sometimes for both; an assortment of vegetables—tomatoes, radishes, onions, greens—is usually found on the table; each comrade makes his own salad. Coffee, milk in not too great abundance, yoghurt, fish, lots of bread, and fresh or stewed fruit, for the morning and evening meal. The big meal is at noon, with meat or fish a few times a week, a heavy soup, potatoes, and a dessert. Tea with bread and jam in the afternoon.

Clothing is figured at forty dollars per capita, annually, plus another fifteen dollars for shoes. Housing maintenance comes to about twenty-four dollars per capita.

A startling item is the sum allowed for vacations. Every kibbutznick has a week or two for annual vacation, which is usually spent in hiking around among other communes, where he feels most at home. But there is another good reason for avoiding the cities or the vacation centers such as Nahariyah and Tiberius, the Palm Beaches and Palm Springs of Palestine. The kibbutznick receives exactly six dollars to spend on his vacation! That is all the commune can afford; the sum is typical not only for Cfar Blum but for most of the settlements.

Many of the comrades augment this by modest sums received from outside, either from relatives in Palestine, or from previous homelands. And there are other ways of visiting Tel Aviv and Jerusalem—frequent trips to departmental seminars, meetings, consultations, and sometimes rest cures. But there are many settlers who have not been away from the kibbutz for years at a time.

Basic medical needs are taken care of through the Kupat Cholim, the workers medical insurance organization of Palestine, which charges about two dollars per month per capita. Additional medical expenses,

sanitarium visits, and cures add up to about \$3,000 yearly for the commune.

Small personal items such as tobacco, razors, and cosmetics are budgeted at \$30 per person, and cultural expenses—books, magazines, newspapers—come to \$8.

Various members of the commune still have relatives in Europe, whom they want to help; for this item, Cfar Blum can afford only \$400 annually, for the entire membership. About \$60 goes from the kibbutz to Habima, Ohel, and other theatrical groups, and a few hundred dollars are divided among the various national institutions and funds such as Keren Kayemet, the Vaad Leumi, and Keren Kibbutz. For children's toys, Cfar Blum spends \$500 yearly.

The budget, calculated in dollars, comes out as follows:

INCOME

Dairy and Sheep	\$18,332
Vegetables	13,508
Fodder	10,000
General Crops	22,608
Fish	68,300
Trucking	18,000
Tractoring	9,600
Factory	51,200
Outside Hire	6,740
	<hr/>
	\$218,288

EXPENDITURES

Food, clothing, etc.	\$82,108
Seeds, fodder	45,848
Fertilizers	2,384
Fuels	7,004
Electricity	1,072
Labor and materials	41,980
Rents	2,400
Insurance	5,080
Taxes	8,000
Administration	7,840
Interest	16,000
Amortization	21,800
	<hr/>
	\$241,516
Increase in permanent assets	23,228
	<hr/>
	\$218,288

IN AN average kibbutz, it is found that about 42 per cent of the work of the members goes into service and maintenance operations; the members usually feel better if they are assigned to the 58 per cent that brings income-producing results. Equalitarian ideology notwithstanding, a tractorist feels more important than a dishwasher.

The two heaviest income-producing occupations at Cfar Blum are fish-breeding and clothespin manufacture. The comrades are still arguing as to whether an artificial fish-breeding enterprise is agricultural or industrial; some of them like to call the fish business a fish factory. About the clothespins there can be no argument.

It is not generally known that Palestine's communal farms have done an outstanding job in developing the relationship between industry and agriculture. Almost every kibbutz has a small industry. Afikim makes plywood; Yagur weaves rugs; Givat Chayim makes barrels; Cfar Blum makes clothespins.

The Hebrew name for this item is *hedek*, and naturally the American comrades refer to their factory as Headache. But in a friendly way. For the Headache brought in some \$50,000 for the year, and may soon be counted on for a third of the community's income.

The factory occupies a shed about the size of a barn, and provides a flexible absorptive medium for labor when agricultural needs slacken; it also absorbs secondary labor—those who are not strong enough for field work, pregnant women, and some refugees. And on rainy days, there's work for almost everybody.

Cfar Blum's clothespins are of the spring-clasp type; they are exported all over Africa and even to Australia. Right now, Yehuda Strimling, of the commune, is in New York, dickering for their introduction to the United States. They may yet be purchaseable at Woolworth's.

The little factory operates a production assembly line, though the parts are turned out mechanically, and further mechanization is continually being developed by Cfar Blum's tinkerers. One machine, designed in the kib-

butz and built in Tel Aviv, bites off the bits of cypress in proper size, grooves them seven different ways, and spits them out by the thousand, just like a bullet-machine in Brooklyn. Only, the Headache stands next to a barn on a marshy plain, with Mount Hermon for a backdrop, and the Jordan river for a moat.

The long rectangular ponds of the fish-factory lie close to the river. The young settlers of Cfar Blum were the pioneers of this business, which has taken the place of orange-growing as the "sure pay crop," dream of every Palestinian. Almost every settlement now has its fish-breeding ponds, but production has not yet reached the peak of local demand, and after Palestine has all the carp needed to supply a piece of *gefilte fish* on Friday for each Jewish resident, there will still remain the smoking and canning markets to be developed.

THOUGH they were the first group to become experts in fish-breeding in Palestine, none of the members of Cfar Blum knew anything about this art when they came to the country.

The original group consisted of about twenty Americans, members of Habonim, the pioneer youth organization, who reached Palestine in 1936. Yehuda Strimling came from Minneapolis, where he had been in the lumber business; Lami Siegal came from a prominent Zionist family of New York, and married Chayim Basin, who came from store-keeping in New Jersey; Isaak Eisenberg was a cutter in Rochester; Joey Cridon was a labor organizer in Buffalo; Joe Feldman and his wife, Kay, were students in Philadelphia; Naomi and Dave Schley were students in Baltimore; Malka Spar was a laboratory technician in Camden.

They had already been together on a Habonim training farm in New Jersey; on arriving in Palestine, they went to Afikim, the big settlement in the lower Jordan valley, for their final work-training.

There seems to be an impression that groups wanting to settle on the land in Palestine are handed a sort of ready-made prop-

osition by the Jewish National Fund. Actually, the grant of an area where a group may endure the hardships of pioneering comes only after the group has already proved its patience and toughness through sometimes years of self-maintenance. The young Americans were not coddled. On leaving Afikim, they set themselves up in a few shacks in the neighborhood of Benyamina, where they hired out as day-laborers to orange-growers. By pooling their earnings, they hoped to acquire some vehicles, machinery, and livestock toward the day of their settlement on their own land. During this time they met and combined with a similar group, mainly Balts, so as to form a number large enough for a kibbutz. There has been no real amalgamation of the two elements, as the Americans were pretty well paired off when they arrived in Palestine; only one inter-marriage has taken place, and as a whole, even today, the Americans tend to stay together.

In the Benyamina years, the Anglo-Balts went through a most rigorous and sometimes embittering apprenticeship. Those years were bad years for orange-growers, and consequently they turned again to cheap labor, attempting to hire Arabs at one-fourth the wage upheld by Jews. The Anglo-Balts took to picketing the groves; there were disorders, and several of their stalwarts were "exiled to Siberia" by the courts—that is, they were sent to the northern mountain village of Metulla, where they might "keep out of trouble."

IN METULLA, the boys found jobs in a hotel, and soon they brought their wives and a few comrades and contracted for the operation of an entire hotel. Then they discovered a labor demand that would enable the whole kibbutz to transfer to the northern Galilee region. The demand came from the Schwartz brothers, a family of fish-breeders from Middle Europe who wanted to try their enterprise in Palestine. They had gained access to a stretch of Jewish National Fund land bordering the Huleh swamp, at the base of the mountain.

Few workers were eager to go down to the

malarial swamp, but the Anglo-Balts took the job. They tractor-scooped a row of fish-ponds for the Schwartz brothers, and then learned how to breed carp.

They paid for their learning in health. But after all, they were also operating a hotel-sanitarium in Metulla.

The Schwartz enterprise proved profitable, and started the fish industry in Palestine. After a few years, the Anglo-Balts received an adjoining swamp area for their own settlement; they drained it, sowed their crops, planted fruit-trees and vineyards, and scooped out fish ponds. During this time, they lived in shacks and tents, and all caught malaria.

The formative period had taken four years. Some of the boys had been separated from their wives and babies for months at a time, as they did not wish to bring their families into the malarial region. Finally the commune decided to build its permanent living quarters. As I have said, the Balts were for doing it gradually. But the Americans felt that the most economical way would be to go at the entire job in one sweep. This meant a year of building. Building costs are incredible in Palestine at present; one must allow four thousand dollars a room for the simplest kind of housing.

The kibbutz received a basic low-interest building loan of \$80,000 from the national institutions. They were able to borrow in various banks at what is considered workable interest—below 8 per cent—for the first two-thirds of the job. But before they were finished they were paying double that interest on emergency short-term loans.

They got the job done. And they finished with malaria.

But now they have the interest. During my last visit to Cfar Blum, as I walked over the fields with Chayim Basin, he said, "About all we work for now is interest. Everything we earn goes to pay on loans."

And yet they have plans laid out for building an international center for Habonim, on their land, in a bend of the Jordan. There, young Americans and other Anglos will come to spend a year or two and make contact with life in Palestine.

And this year, too, it was from Cfar Blum that the pioneers for a new settlement went out one night. The comrades of Cfar Blum went with them, after spending a whole night building a bridge over the Jordan to get the tractors and building materials across. The new settlement was also on Jewish National Fund land, which had been bought—not once, but twice—from Arab squatters. However, on the day of settlement, there was an attack; two settlers and two Arabs were killed.

JUST after I got back to America, Yehuda Strimling appeared. He was on a mission from Cfar Blum.

Part of his job was to purchase a new machine for the further mechanization of Headache, and to see about extending the clothespin market to America. But he also wanted to find some Americans who would put up a total of \$100,000, at 4 per cent interest, for ten years, so that the commune could refund its debts and pay off the high-interest loans that were consuming its energy.

There was a drawing-room meeting, one evening, at which he tried to explain the project. It was strange to see how foreign this all sounded to New Yorkers. They could not understand why the kibbutz should have all these difficulties. It was new to them that each settlement must make its own way. They seemed to have had the feeling that the settlements were completely subsidized. Yehuda explained that the Keren Kayemet and the Keren Hayesod—strange names to

them—could only extend partial financing, due to limited funds, and that many kibbutzim were in similar difficulties, working themselves out only through privation and persistence.

Mostly, the New Yorkers had read about the deeds of the terrorists, and many had been attracted to the Irgun, and had given money to organizations which, they believed, supported the Irgun. They were quite startled when Yehuda stated, categorically, that none of those organizations had up to the time of his departure brought a single refugee to Palestine. "We're the ones who do it," Yehuda said. "And the only way we will get any part of Palestine is by going and sitting on it, as our own bunch did in the Huleh and as the new kibbutzim are doing in the Negev."

The New York women looked at him, a bony, dark, toughened little man who might have been the chairman of a workers' committee in one of their husbands' shops, except that he was thinner and not so well dressed, and perhaps had a somewhat more absolute dignity.

And suddenly one of the ladies saw the light. "That's the real thing," I heard her whisper to her husband. "That's a real pioneer from Palestine. . . ."

At this writing Yehuda Strimling of Cfar Blum is still in New York trying to raise his loan of \$100,000, at 4 per cent, for ten years. He's not crazy about this assignment. But as he says, "You have to do all kinds of things in a kibbutz."

THE MONTH IN HISTORY

Palestine and World Strategy

THE new Truman policy was not simply a policy for Greece and Turkey. It was a policy for the whole world, but one which was to be carried out first in the Middle East. Truman's initial move was in terms of Greece and Turkey because the threat to strategic interests was greatest in these two countries. It highlighted the fact that Palestine, for all its troublesomeness, was not a top-priority strategic spot to the Anglo-American front. This category was reserved for such nations as Greece, Turkey, Iran, and Korea, which were in direct physical contact with the weight of the Soviet glacier. Palestine was still an interior line of communication, not an exposed salient.

And if Truman felt it was more important to take a strong stand in Greece and Turkey, it was also true that it was easier for him to do so politically. Truman could hardly be expected to do anything other than buttress the existing regimes in Greece and Turkey. There would be reservations and objections, but in the end he would get general support. But what regime to support in Palestine was a much more complicated question.

Yet it was a matter that he could not postpone indefinitely. Palestine may not have been of primary strategic importance, but it was part of the defense in depth in the Middle East to which the U.S., by clear implication, was now committed. While Britain could involve the United States in Greece

and Turkey simply by walking out of these countries, Britain, as the mandatory, could not simply walk out of Palestine. Apparently the only way in which Britain could force more responsible U.S. involvement in Palestine was to turn it over to the United Nations.

Indecision at the Gates

However, by the end of March, six weeks after the British Cabinet decided to submit the problem of Palestine to the General Assembly of the United Nations, nothing had legally happened. Secretary-General Trygve Lie announced on March 26 that he had had no communication from anybody on the matter.

Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech-Jones told the House of Commons on March 3 that the British government was taking steps to see whether UN action could be expedited. There were no official announcements on what expediting measures might be undertaken, but there was much activity in the realm of authoritative sources.

Britain was reported to favor a "skeleton" special session of the General Assembly to be called before the regular meeting in September. The cost of such a session was reported to be the stumbling-block.

Lie was reported to favor immediate establishment of a fact-finding commission to report to the regular meeting of the General Assembly. The United States was reported to be questioning the legality of this move. Meanwhile, a special section in the UN secretariat was reported to have been set up to gather facts for the reported fact-finding commission.

On March 6 Warren R. Austin, head of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations, said that he had had "no indication as yet" from Washington on the American position. "This is too serious for us to reach a decision lightly," he added.

On March 7 the U.S. delegation to the

IN THIS regular department, SIDNEY HERTZBERG seeks to provide an objective and unpartisan monthly report of Jewish affairs in their relationship to world events. He brings to this task the perspective gained by years of study of the stuff of history, and lengthy experience as a news analyst and editor with *Current History*, *Time*, the *New York Times*, and *Common Sense*. His reports, like other contributions to COMMENTARY, reflect the writer's judgment, and do not necessarily express the opinion of the editors.

United Nations issued a formal statement: "The United States is unable to reach a final conclusion with respect to the best procedure for dealing with this problem in the United Nations in the absence of a concrete formulation of the problem by the British government."

Meanwhile, Abdul Rahman Azzam Pasha, secretary-general of the Arab League, openly announced in Cairo that the Political Committee of the Arab League had rejected the proposal to set up a fact-finding commission.

Toward the end of the month, the Embassy in London announced that it was meeting with British representatives on procedure for submission of the problem to the UN.

A definite course finally emerged. The British would ask for a skeleton special session of the General Assembly to meet in May for the specific purpose of legalizing the establishment of a fact-finding committee which would report to the regular General Assembly meeting in September. The approval of a majority of the members of the General Assembly was required to legalize the special session.

Calculated Reticence

Behind these reports there had been reports to the effect that the matter might not go to the UN after all, or that it might go in the form of an agreed settlement. Whatever might finally happen, it was certainly historical truth that Britain was following a fluid course on more than procedural details.

Nor was it reasonable to assume that the delay was due to procedural uncertainties. A British decision to go to the UN would certainly not have been made without a parallel decision on procedure which would have minimized the threats to Britain's strategic position involved in such a move.

It seemed far more likely that Britain's delay in officially presenting the matter to the UN in some specific form was designed to achieve concessions from the United States.

Bevin's petulance over the American role in the situation was not really resentment of American interference, but rather resentment of American interference without assumption of responsibility. With Britain dumping her strategic responsibilities in Greece and Turkey on the steps of an eagerly hospitable White House, it was quite obvi-

ous that Britain would also want the United States to share or take over its responsibilities in Palestine.

Agreed Solution

The key to any agreed solution in Palestine was inevitably the United States. Only the United States had the resources to make it worth the while of Arab leaders to make concessions in Palestine and the prestige to see the bargain through.

Two solutions seemed possible. One would involve a postponement of a final political solution in Palestine in exchange for large-scale Jewish immigration and the repeal of restrictive land laws. The other would be partition. Both solutions would have to involve substantial *quid pro quos* to the Arabs and especially to King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia. Neither Egypt nor Ibn Saud would look kindly on partition if partition involved incorporation of Arab Palestine into Trans-Jordan and ultimately the incorporation of Trans-Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon into a greater Syrian federation. Such a federation would come under the control of the Hashemite rulers of Iraq and Trans-Jordan, who were the particular rivals of Ibn Saud for dominance of the Middle East and also rivals of the influence of the Egyptian royal house.

Yet the imposition of a solution unacceptable to the Zionists could not be completely ruled out. In the new American policy, the anti-Soviet aspect outweighed the pro-democratic aspect. If, for strategic reasons, the United States was willing to bolster the semi-fascist Turkish regime, there was no reason to believe that it would hesitate to yield to an absolute monarchy such as Saudi Arabia. The value of Zionism as a democratic force in the Middle East was not likely to prevent the United States from supporting Arab reaction.

The tragedy of the situation was that Zionism as a nationalist doctrine had so alienated even Arab progressives that it seemed impossible to reach a solution that would permit Zionism as a democratic force to operate freely in an area that needed it so badly, and where it could serve not simply as a defense for a Jewish national home but also, fortuitously, as a bulwark for world democracy. Democratic Zionism could have been a spearhead for the political defense in

depth of the Middle East. This would have been possible only through a complete re-orientation of Anglo-American policy in the area. It was not surprising that capitalist America should fail to see this opportunity. But the fact that it never seemed to have been seriously considered by socialist Britain was a sign of Britain's ideological or economic poverty, or of both.

Yet, even if a new approach should suddenly become theoretically acceptable to the United States and Britain, it was probably too late to adopt it, because the respective practitioners of old-style oil imperialism, feudal Arab nationalism, and militant Jewish statism had now gone too far to turn back.

The Agency's Plans

After a ten-day meeting in Jerusalem, the Jewish Agency Executive, on March 24, issued a statement on the new position which meticulously followed the futile phraseological compromises of the Basel Congress. The decision to take Palestine to the United Nations was "a significant political deviation." In appearing before the United Nations the Agency "will unfold before the supreme international body the problem of the Jewish people in all its scope, gravity and urgency. It will inveigh against the Mandatory Government's repudiation of its obligations and demand a solution of the problem which will enable the Jewish people to assume responsibility for its own fate."

The Agency's specific plan of action vis à vis the United Nations was as follows:

"a) When appearing before the United Nations and its member states, the Executive and its representatives will present the full political program of the Zionist Movement as formulated by the last Zionist Congress; b) Representatives of the Jewish Agency will insist upon full discharge of the Mandate so long as British authority remains in Palestine wherein it has no other legal basis than the Mandate; c) Representatives of the Jewish Agency will be empowered to examine the possibility of other solutions which will safeguard the rights of the Jewish people to uninterrupted immigration and wide settlement and assure the creation of a Jewish State—without committing the Zionist movement to an advance acceptance."

What these three points meant in plain language was: a) the Agency would say it

was for a Jewish state in an undivided Palestine; b) it would press for immediate large-scale immigration and repeal of restrictions on land purchase, and if it got these concessions it would be happy to have Britain continue as the mandatory power; c) it would be willing to accept partition as a long-term solution.

Terrorism Again

The Agency reaffirmed its decision on terrorism in the following terms:

"The Executive notes with concern and anxiety that the demand of the Zionist Congress that dissident groups refrain from bloodshed and accept national discipline of the organized Yishuv and the Zionist Movement has not been heeded. The Executive regards it as a duty to dwell again upon the moral and political harm involved in the terrorist acts of the dissidents. These acts distort the true character of the Yishuv in the eyes of the world and defeat its political struggle. The Executive once more summons the dissidents to accept national discipline and declares that the Zionist Movement and Organization will extend full aid to the Yishuv in its efforts against terrorism."

The Agency found it advisable to reassert its own authority as spokesman for the Zionist movement. In so doing it gave official cognizance to the reports that the Agency's authority was threatened by the activities of the terrorist groups. The Agency said:

"The Executive also expresses its confidence that no external aggression or internal undermining will succeed in shaking the Yishuv's loyalty to the elected leadership of the Zionist Movement. The Executive calls on the Yishuv to rally in a united effort to extend and strengthen its economic positions in town and countryside; to augment assistance to immigration and its absorption; to muster from its midst as formerly, pioneer forces for new settlement; to consolidate its security and missions to the Diaspora and to strengthen every other function necessitated in this emergency epoch."

The UN Line-Up

The Arab League adopted a resolution declaring it would argue the case before the United Nations on the basis of complete independence for Palestine as an Arab state. The League was reported to be prepared to

insist that the controversy was primarily between the Arabs and the British and not between the Arabs and the Zionists.

Argentina

The first official indication of how the members of the United Nations would line up came from Argentina. President Juan Peron announced that his country's representatives at the UN would support the demand for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

The Peron commitment might have had some value to Zionists as an example for any other nation that might be impressed by Peron. No one was likely to be fooled, however, about Peron's motives. Peron's motives emphasized the fact that the Zionist case would be decided in the capitals of the world on the basis of a combination of complicated internal and external considerations which would result in decisions that had no relation to abstract justice or logical argumentation.

Whether or not Peron was a full-fledged fascist, he was obviously no democrat. At the moment, a favorable gesture toward the Jews could serve him usefully. Peron was being criticized in Argentina for making an agreement with the British on British-owned railroads in Argentina that was too favorable to the British. A vague pro-Zionist commitment, with its inevitable anti-British implications, would help counteract this criticism. It could also serve to strengthen U.S. Ambassador George S. Messersmith, a pro-Peron man, in his controversy with Assistant Secretary of State Spruille Braden, who was anti-Peron.

Hence the pro-Zionist gesture and hence Peron's granting of permission to forty-seven Jewish DP's to land in Argentina after they had been refused entry into Brazil and Uruguay. Along with these gestures, Peron followed a laissez-faire policy toward a substantial group of his followers who were anti-Semitic. Discrimination against Jews and anti-Semitic outbursts in Argentina continued without hindrance from the man who professed support for the Jewish national home in Palestine.

India

Considerations of a more principled nature obtained in India. Here, as in the whole

Middle East, Zionism was still regarded by all nationalists as an aspect of British imperialism. The fact that there were more Moslems in India than in any other country in the world strengthened this view. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Vice-President of the Interim government of India, declared at the Inter-Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi that the people of India believed that "Palestine is essentially an Arab country and no decision can be made without the consent of the Arabs." He also said that "the people of India have, during these last years, sympathized most greatly with the sufferings of the Jews in Europe and elsewhere." Arabs and Jews in Palestine would be able to settle their problems among themselves, he said, "if the third party were removed."

Martial Law

DURING the first two weeks of March, the British imposed statutory martial law in Tel Aviv and a group of the surrounding communities affecting nearly 250,000 of the Jewish population of Palestine. The verbal exchanges accompanying this operation were a dreary repetition of what was by now a well-worn theme. The British communique accused the Agency and the Jewish National Council of failure to cooperate in suppressing terror. These bodies replied once more that it was the British who were failing to cooperate by refusing to make any concessions on the question of immigration, without which any effort to suppress terror would fail. There seemed to be no bridge between these two positions.

The principal effect of the two weeks of martial law seemed to be the economic loss involved. The British made seventy-eight arrests and announced that they had gained valuable information for future operations. Some elements in the Jewish community had cooperated in suppressing the terror, the British declared. But after a few days of quiet the terrorist attacks were resumed.

Anglo-U.S. Post-Mortem

AS THE problem of Palestine moved into the United Nations, the report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on European Jewry and Palestine made in April 1946 seemed to have no more significance than the seventeen previous reports on Palestine. However, it was the most recent of

them and most of those involved in its disposition were still in a position to affect the situation.

The two youngest and the most vocal members of the Committee had been Bartley C. Crum, a San Francisco lawyer, and Richard H. S. Crossman, a left-wing Labor MP. Last month both men produced books (*Palestine Mission*, Crossman; *Behind the Silken Curtain*, Crum) about their experiences as members of the Committee which filled in some of the blanks in the record and threw new light on the attitudes of the men who were deciding the fate of Palestine.

Bevin's Commitment

The most frequently made accusation against the British was that they refused to implement the unanimous report of the Anglo-American Committee. Usually what was meant was that they refused to permit immigration of 100,000 displaced Jews into Palestine, which was one of the Committee's recommendations. The accusation was usually made by persons who were violently opposed to many of the other recommendations, one of which was that Palestine must never become a Jewish, Arab or Christian state.

Both Crum and Crossman were agreed that Foreign Secretary Bevin made a commitment. Crum quoted Bevin as saying at a luncheon in London: "We shall accept your recommendations." Crossman did not quote Bevin directly but reported that he "stated slowly but emphatically that, if we achieved a unanimous report, he would personally do everything in his power to put it into effect."

Before publication of the books, the British Foreign Office had denied having any knowledge of this pledge. But Bevin himself had never denied it, and he seemed to be thinking of it in his speech to the House of Commons on February 25. Pointing out that the U.S. was willing to accept only the recommendation on immigration for 100,000 displaced Jews, Bevin added: "I was perfectly willing to stand up to the problem of the report as a whole, which included ten points. I have never gone back on that, but even if I had, as events have turned out, it would not have settled the Palestine problem, as I shall show before I sit down, we could not undertake this except as part of the general settlement, and we had to continue our efforts to work out policy."

Crossman, in his book, declared that Prime Minister Attlee's insistence that moving 100,000 Jews into Palestine be preceded by the disarming of all private armies was disastrous. However, he also regarded President Truman's singling out of the immigration recommendation as "lamentable." Attlee, Crossman added, "very properly reminded the President that the report must be considered as a whole."

Acceptance of the report, Crossman pointed out, would have involved the complete reorientation of Britain's Middle Eastern policy. This seemed to him an almost hopeless prospect in view of the Cabinet's preoccupation with the peace conference in Paris, mounting tension with the Soviet Union, and the crises in the negotiations with the Egyptians and Indians.

However, in an attempt to save the report, Crossman arranged two meetings between David Ben Gurion and George Hall, who was Colonial Secretary at the time. These talks seemed to be going hopefully, he reported, but they came to an abrupt end with the bombing of the King David Hotel.

Crossman felt that "violent popular resentment against America" helped buttress the Cabinet in its policy. "The more the government was attacked by the Americans and the Jews, the stronger support it received in the country," he observed.

Labor's Blow to Zionism

Bartley C. Crum quoted Dr. Chaim Weizmann as follows:

"I had a promise from Mr. Churchill that if he were returned to office in the summer of 1945, he would immediately go forward with a generous partition plan. But—" Weizmann did not complete the sentence.

If Churchill's pledge could be given more weight than Labor party pledges, Zionism's great blow was the Socialist victory in Britain.

Various Views

In Vienna, after visiting displaced persons centers, the Committee argued heatedly about whether to issue an interim report. Crum felt so strongly that a positive report on immigration be issued that he threatened to resign if it were not. He was dissuaded from insisting on an interim report by Judge Joseph C. Hutcheson, American co-chairman

of the Committee. He learned later, Crum wrote, that the White House had asked that no interim report be made but that short-term recommendations be included in the final report. "What deep maneuverings were behind this, I do not know," Crum remarked.

The views of Judge Hutcheson seemed to be more fully reflected in the report than those of any other member. Crum wrote that the principal influences on Judge Hutcheson were the testimony of Judge Joseph Proskauer, president of the American Jewish Committee, and of Dr. Judah Magnes, and the views of Hashomer Hatzair. The most militant pro-Zionist position, Crum reported, was taken by Frank Buxton, editor of the *Boston Herald*. According to Crum, Buxton opposed partition and favored "an eventual Jewish state in an undivided Palestine." Though both Crossman and Crum signed the report, they favored partition. They reported that Dr. Weizmann, David Ben Gurion, and Moshe Shertok were willing to accept partition. This was in the spring of 1946.

U.S. Ambivalence

Crum quoted excerpts from a file of confidential communications on Palestine supplied to the Committee by the Division of Near Eastern Affairs of the State Department. This correspondence, Crum felt, constituted proof that "middle levels" of the State Department were constantly giving private assurances to Arab officials that dis-

counted American public promises to the Jews.

However, this correspondence added nothing to what was known of America's ambivalent policy in the Middle East. The letters of State Department officials to various Arab officials, from which Crum quoted, followed the line established by Franklin D. Roosevelt in his exchange of letters with King Ibn Saud assuring the Arabian monarch that no decision with respect to the "basic situation" in Palestine would be taken without full consultation with both Arabs and Jews. What duplicity there was in American policy toward the Middle East came from the highest level, not from middle levels of American policy-making.

Additional evidence of this was supplied by Crossman. A sub-committee of the Anglo-American Committee headed by Sir John Singleton, the British co-chairman, had visited King Ibn Saud. According to this sub-committee, Ibn Saud reported the following exchange between himself and Roosevelt:

Ibn Saud: "If you assure me that you are speaking man to man, I would ask you why you are so insistent on the immigration of the Jews into Palestine and on giving them domination there contrary to justice."

Roosevelt: "I tell you frankly that I neither ordered nor approved of the immigration of Jews to Palestine, nor is it possible that I should approve it."

SIDNEY HERTZBERG

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

PAPA'S CONFLICT

Portrait of a Man with Two Strings to his Bow

HENRY STEIG

MY FATHER, who was born in Lemberg, now better known as Lvov, in Austrian Poland, came to New York in 1903, at the age of twenty-eight. He came alone. My mother remained in Lemberg with their eighteen-month-old son, to be sent for later.

Papa made the ocean leg of the journey from Hamburg on the German S. S. "Pennsylvania" as a steerage passenger, spending nights in a dormitory below deck with a lot of other men. The three-tiered bunks had shallow sideboards. Occupants who did not hold tight to the woodwork were apt to be spilled, so falling asleep was dangerous. All

HENRY STEIG has been at various times a jazz musician, a cartoonist, a lifeguard, a toolmaker, a photographer, and a teacher of arts and crafts, but he has concentrated on writing for the past twelve years. His stories have appeared in the *New Yorker*, *Collier's*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Esquire*, and various other magazines, and in 1941 he published a novel about jazz musicians, *Send Me Down*. Mr. Steig comes from a family of artists; the best-known member of the family in that field is his brother, William. In 1945 the Steig family had a group exhibition at the New Art Circle in New York, showing work by Mr. Steig's parents, three sons, Henry, William, and Arthur, and their wives. Both of Mr. Steig's parents have had one-man shows; art has been their main interest for the past ten years or so. Henry Steig was born in New York City in 1906 and attended the city public schools and the College of the City of New York, leaving college at the end of his junior year to study art at the National Academy of Design Art Schools.

night long, in rough weather, people were picking themselves off the floor and clambering back to their berths, crying and cursing in twenty-one languages. My father, who knew Polish, German, Yiddish, and some Hebrew, no doubt made himself heard in all four languages.

Steerage fare was only forty dollars, but dollars were worth a lot, then, and he didn't think that the steamship company was taking a loss on its main cargo. He grumbled about things, as did many of his fellow-travelers. But they, at heart, approved of the profit system, and seemed to feel that they could not expect better food and accommodations than they were getting, at the price. Papa didn't see it that way. The way he saw it, those below deck were paying for the luxuries of those above, whom they outnumbered by far. The ship exemplified capitalist society, which, he was sure, was going to be changed. Some day, steerage would be abolished; no one would be made to serve as ballast. That day could not be far off, he felt; he had to try to be patient.

But papa had no patience at all with the behavior of the stewards, whom he looked upon as an unbearably arrogant police force. The stewards, in their passion for cleanliness, kept pushing people aside with their mops and brooms. Sometimes, when they were in a hurry, they even used their feet to get immigrants out of their way.

One day my father was sitting on his luggage, near his bunk, reading. A steward began mopping up the dormitory. Rounding a corner at the end of an aisle between

bunks and coming upon my father, he kept right on going. Papa was wearing a pair of new, pointy, ankle-high shoes of black patent leather and gray suede with shiny white buttons, very stylish in Lemberg. Before he could jump, they were doused with dirty water, and so was his new carpetbag. "Be careful, there, you slob," he said. The steward was not accustomed to that kind of talk from a steerage passenger. In a rage, he ordered my father out of there, threatening to hit him with the mop if he did not move fast enough. Now papa, who at seventy-two can still haul himself up a rope hand over hand, though not a large man, must have been an exceptionally strong and agile one in 1903. The steward didn't stand a chance. Papa got quick possession of the mop and pushed it in the steward's face. After another day or two at sea, the stewards were referring to my father as "that mad Polack" and treating him like a first-class passenger.

Papa was not a religious man. At sixteen, after thirteen years of intensive religious training, which had begun to bore him, he had got hold of some socialist literature. Karl Marx won. Deciding he'd had enough religion, my father dropped it all. But he remained a firm believer in freedom of worship, and he felt that Jews had as much right to hold religious services as the people of other faiths aboard ship.

There were some cabins in the hold, occupied by family groups. On the first Saturday at sea, a Jewish family in one of those cabins invited some people in to join them in prayer. Presently a team of stewards began sweeping out the place. The congregation found another room, but again were swept out. Somehow, every room they tried to use turned out to be the one which the stewards felt needed their immediate attention. My father decided that this was no coincidence. He put an end to it by going to the captain.

All in all, papa was far from pleased with life below deck and he made up his mind to let the world know about it. In Poland he had earned his living as a house painter, but he had also been a free-lance journalist and had had a lot of stories and articles published in liberal and radical European newspapers. He made up his mind to write a piece describing conditions in steerage on

the S. S. "Pennsylvania" and get it printed in an American newspaper.

AFTER getting settled with his older brother, Jake, who had come to America earlier and lived in a lower East Side slum, papa had to find a job. This brought up a problem. He didn't want to go on indefinitely dividing his talents and energies between house painting and journalism; he wanted to specialize in one or the other.

In those days, any painter worth his salt knew how to grind and mix colors and make varnishes and enamels from raw materials, and how to do all sorts of fancy work, like glazing, wood-graining, and gilding. My father was an expert at all of that. In addition, he could decorate wall panels with garlands of flowers and fruit, or with groups of lively pink cherubs sitting on clouds, copied from a small master print. As a child, I saw an example of his work in the foyer of a swell apartment house and thought papa a great artist.

A man could get a certain amount of aesthetic pleasure out of house painting. Still, writing appealed to papa as the superior trade, intellectually. Moreover, writing could do more to help remake the world. But there was little money in it. Another big trouble was editors. They were forever cutting his stories and changing them, and he didn't like the way some editors took charge of his ideas, which, he said, they wanted him to express not as his own genius dictated, but in the indescribably wonderful style they would use if they were writers. As a house painter, he could call his soul his own. On the other hand, house painting was a seasonal occupation. A man was lucky if he was kept busy at it more than half the year. Journalism was steady work; people wanted newspapers every day, like food.

Papa decided that the most practical thing to do, right off, was to get a job as a painter and work on the steamship story in his spare time.

The letter which follows, written to mama by papa when he had been in New York for about two weeks, sums up the situation:

May 3, 1903

Dearest Lola,

I'm quite confident that we'll be happy here, though there may be something of a

struggle in the beginning, for things in general look promising. Good beef costs only 12 cents a pound (almost half a kilo) and you can get the choicest steak for sixteen cents. Though I am as yet a poorer man than I was in Poland, I eat like a king on a holiday. I can even afford many delicacies, such as bananas, grapes, nuts, figs, and dates, which we hardly ever saw at home. Gas is so plentiful that it is used not only for lighting the streets but also, in all but the poorest homes, for cooking, which is a great convenience. There is a good variety of excellent clothing at reasonable prices, and, as for cotton goods—just to give you an idea, a fine handkerchief costs only a few cents!

There seems to be plenty of work in the house-painting trade. I've already got a job, which pays a dollar and a half a day (seven and a half Polish crowns). That's not bad, considering I'm new here, and soon, with my experience, I should be doing better.

The language is difficult, mainly because of its chaotic grammar, which contains more exceptions than rules, and so causes a lot of confusion. I'm making fair headway, though, by studying the newspapers, and books which I get from the public library, like Shakespeare's tragedies, in English, which I know so well in Polish. I do a little writing at night and hope eventually to get some work from one of the local papers.

The customs are strange. New Yorkers hardly ever tip their hats to one another, and when it's warm, many of them go about without coats or vests or collars. Imagine a tradesman waiting on you in his shirtsleeves! But that's a common occurrence, and I'm getting used to it. . . .

I miss you and the baby terribly and of course I'm bending every effort to get passage money together as quickly as possible.

Love,

Joseph

AT ABOUT this time, my father completed the steamship article. He wrote it in Yiddish, having in mind the *Forward*, a comparatively new Jewish evening paper, then the only one of any importance professing socialist policies. The story took up many sheets of paper. These he joined end to end with paste, forming one long single sheet, the way it was done in Lemberg.

One fine spring morning, taking time off

from his painting job, he put on a new gray cutaway, his new shoes, and a black fedora, rolled up the manuscript, and set out for the editorial offices of the *Forward*. As he walked along through the East Side, swinging his cane, he heard some children behind him chanting:

*Greenhorn, popcorn, five cents a bag;
July, July, go to hell and die.*

Looking around, he saw one of them pointing at his feet, amidst general laughter. Guessing they might be Jewish children, papa inquired in Yiddish what it was that tickled them so. "The shoes," one of them answered in Yiddish. "Where'd you get them? Such green shoes!" My father's shoes looked all right to him. Silly children, what did they know? With a laugh and a shrug, he continued on his way. The kids followed, picking up the greenhorn, popcorn chant again. Fearing that they might escort him thus all the way to the offices of the *Forward*, he considered flight. But that would be undignified. Finally, pretending to like the ditty, he asked the children to repeat it. They drew away a little and eyed him suspiciously. "Well, let's hear," he said and gave them a couple of pennies. They went through it twice while he kept time with his cane. "That was fine," he said, handing over more pennies. "Come on, now, let's have it again, all together!" They obliged him, but their hearts weren't in it. The chanting tapered off, and stopped.

Papa had letters of introduction which showed that he was a capable worker for the Cause and he expected to be welcomed at the *Forward* as a comrade and fellow journalist. But he was a greenhorn—his get-up gave him away—and the editor's guards weren't letting any greenhorns in if they could help it. However, by promising he would not leave until he had seen the editor, he broke through after an hour or so.

Mr. Liessin, the editor-in-chief, read the letters of introduction and then papa handed him the manuscript. Liessin watched in alarm as it sprang open on his desk. It unrolled itself to the end of the desk and down to the floor. Liessin rose from his chair, backing away from papa, and began calling for help. "Save me! Rescue me from the Green Shoes!" Papa was badly startled for a moment.

An assistant rushed in, ready for laughs. He was wearing bright orange shoes, papa noticed.

"Keep your eye on him," Liessin told the assistant with a gesture at papa, and picked up a ruler. He measured papa's story and announced that it was three yards long. "What is this, for God's sake, a romance?"

My father told him what it was.

"Didn't you ever hear of paper clips where you come from?"

"Where I come from," papa explained, "editors like manuscripts kept all in one piece."

"A strange country."

"I suppose so. All that mattered there was the writing itself."

"Don't be a wise guy," said the assistant. "You're in America now."

"All right, all right," papa answered. "Tomorrow I'll get a pair of shoes like yours, just give me a chance."

"That'll do," the editor said to my father and dismissed him.

Papa got a criticism a few days later. Liessin said that the writing was passable but the piece would have to be cut drastically. Papa took it home, condensed it, and resubmitted it on separate sheets, clipped together. It was a week before he got to Liessin again. The editor wanted the story cut still more, a lot more. Papa complied, and a few more days passed. The colder the story got, the shorter Liessin wanted it. It shrunk to a few lines, and in the end petered out into nothing. Papa put the pen aside and concentrated on the brush.

IT WAS now June. Mama, waiting in Poland, was getting impatient. She and papa had set up house in Lemberg only a few years earlier, and she had some nice things which were still in good condition. She estimated that by selling the furnishings she could manage to pay her train fare to Hamburg. She hoped, also, to save some money for incidental travelling expenses from a little dressmaking business, carried on at home, by which she was supporting herself and the baby. All she would need, then, would be a forty-dollar steerage ticket for herself and a few dollars for the baby's passage. She explained this in a letter to papa, adding: "If America is such a wonderful country, it seems to me you should have

the forty dollars by now. We're lonely and the baby keeps asking for you, so please hurry."

Here's papa's answer:

June 16, 1903

Beloved!

Surely my loneliness is as great as yours.

Don't forget that "The Golden Land" is only a figure of speech and that I started with nothing. There is more than the forty dollars to worry about. I must establish a home for the three of us, but that requires capital, and how much can I save out of nine dollars a week when I have to pay Jake four (three for board and one for my own steamship ticket, which he got for me on the installment plan)?

Then there is something else—a totally unforeseen difficulty involving a certain American trick of the trade which is being kept secret from me, out of professional jealousy. Not to bother you with the details, I'll say only that it's costing me three dollars a week! That is, I'd be earning at least twelve dollars a week by now if my employers did not take advantage of that little gap in my knowledge. However, they won't be able to keep the trick a secret from me much longer. Greenhorn or not, I was a much better painter when I was an apprentice than some of the "journeymen" I see around me, judging from their work.

You must know that our reunion cannot be brought about any too soon for my own happiness. Please be patient.

Lovingly,

Joseph

As the letter indicates, papa had no false modesty about his skill and speed at house painting. He was competent at handling men and materials, too. In the old country, working for a big contractor, he had been in charge of a whole crew of house painters. In New York, however, he was treated as a beginner and given a lot more than his share of the dirty work, such as scraping wallpaper, bleaching floors, pushing furniture about, and cleaning brushes—simply because he did not know how to mix kalsomine. The men he worked with made a big mystery of it, hiding behind closed doors.

That was the trade secret papa had referred to in his letter to mama. He tried

again and again to spy on the process, but the other men were on guard. All he got was: "Mind your own business—you're too damned nosy for a greenhorn."

Papa quit his first job because of this, hoping to learn the secret elsewhere. But when he applied for his second job, he was asked at once whether he knew how to mix kalsomine, and had to admit he didn't. Then and there he was marked as fresh off the boat, and given wallpaper to scrape. In vain he protested that he was a master at decorative work. That counted for nothing when the foreman on the job could say to the boss about papa: "He's a green one—he doesn't know from kalsomine."

To get to know from kalsomine became of burning importance to my father. Kalsomine was keeping him separated from mama and the baby—that's what it all boiled down to.

He stayed on the second job for several weeks, trying to nose out the secret, and failed. The other painters were themselves immigrants, not very long in America, who had had trouble with kalsomine, too, in the beginning. But, as they told my father, "We all had to go through what you're going through. Why should we make it easy for you?"

WITH summer came the slack season, and papa was laid off. Having learned that paint dealers often did contracting on the side, he began running around from one paint store to another, trying to pick up odd jobs. What he got didn't amount to much; it hardly paid for board at his brother's. He wrote mama sadly: "Please bear with me a little longer. I'm working very hard, dreaming of the day when we'll be together again in a home of our own, just the three of us. I'm not at all happy at Jake's place. Were it possible, I'd get out of there tomorrow, if only to escape the bedbugs, which are of an exceptionally large and ferocious breed. Fortunately there is a public park nearby, at Seventh Street. That's where I sleep when weather permits. A refreshing spot of cool green in the heart of the city. It'll be nice for the baby . . ."

Not long afterwards, around the middle of July, things began to look up for papa. He had made some samples of his graining work on squares of cardboard, simulating on each a different kind of wood. These made

an impression on the paint dealers he showed them to and by luck he found one, by the name of Wernow, who had enough work to keep one man busy for the rest of the summer. Wernow took papa on at the standard rate for greenhorns of a dollar and a half a day, promising to pay two dollars a day when papa proved he was a good all-round house painter.

The next day, papa was put to work, all by himself, in a flat which was to be completely repainted. For the first time, he found himself alone with a bag of kalsomine. Excitedly he opened the bag and examined the white powder it contained. It appeared to be ordinary whitewash. He suspected that he had been the victim of a hoax. He mixed some up in a pail of water and tried it on the ceiling. It still looked like the stuff he had used a thousand times in the old country, so he went calmly ahead. Presently a strange thing happened: the mix began to thicken. It changed rapidly into a sort of pudding. The warm weather and the effort of wielding the big kalsomine brush with such an unwilling vehicle soon had him in a sweat. He tried stirring some more water into it to thin it, but that only broke it up and made it lumpy. He was afraid to go any farther with this unpredictable substance, and after taking a good look at the patch of ceiling he had already done, he left everything as it was and ran away.

Next morning, he was looking for another job. At noon, having found nothing, he went guiltily back to Wernow's paint store to try to square himself.

"What happened to you, anyway?" Wernow demanded.

"Had a little trouble with the ceiling."

"A fine mess you made of it!"

Papa had to explain why.

"You green wretch," Wernow said, "all you had to do was ask me about the kalsomine. I'd have told you."

"You would?"

"Sure, there's nothing to it. Mix it with hot water, strain it through cheese cloth, and then set it to cool in a tub of cold water. When it jells, it's ready to use."

"Thanks," papa sighed and waited.

"Well, don't just hang around! Get to work!"

Back on the job, papa happily cleaned up the ceiling, and did it over, properly. After

that, everything went well. At the end of the week he was docked a day's pay, but the following week Wernow began paying him two dollars a day.

At about this time papa received mama's answer to his last letter. If he was hinting at the possibility of a very long separation, she said, he had better get the notion out of his head. She wanted him to send her passage at once, and she didn't care how he got the money for it. If necessary, she would beg, borrow, or steal it herself. She was coming to New York with the baby before the summer was over—nothing would stop her, somehow she'd find a way. The letter tickled papa and had a greatly spurring effect upon him. He bought a steerage ticket for mama on the installment plan, paying ten dollars down, and sent it right off. Then he rented a three-room flat on Avenue D and equipped it with second-hand furniture and cheap new kitchen ware. He got the money from friends, cheerfully putting himself in hock. What was there to be afraid of, now that he knew from kalsomine?

MAMA arrived at Ellis Island with the baby on a hot day at the end of August. The first impressions she got of America, on the way to Avenue D with papa, were far from favorable. The crowds of noisy people in the shopping district alarmed her. The men walking around without jackets or collars disturbed her, even though papa had warned her about it. And then there was a sight for which she had not been prepared at all: men in their undershirts. She saw them from the trolley-car window—workmen busy at an excavation—and she was dismayed.

She got another shock when they reached Avenue D. Someone was throwing refuse out of a window. Papa got her and their son indoors quickly.

He thought the flat was very nice. His brother's home, where he had been living since April, had only one window, no running water, and, for cooking, an old coal stove. The new flat had running water, a window in each room, and a real kitchen, with a sink and a gas range. But mama had not as yet seen Jake's home. She could only compare the new place to her apartment in Lemberg, which had had larger, lighter rooms, besides running water, and also a

view. There was no view on Avenue D—no vista, not a speck of green, only dismal brick walls.

Mama made no complaint until she got to the bedroom and took a look from the window into the alley that separated them from the next building. Then she turned to papa, visibly shaken. "A land of barbarians!" she said. "Just look—underwear on the wash-lines! Men's and women's underthings, hanging right there for everyone to see!"

"It's time for supper," papa said and took her to the kitchen to show her the gas range, the one big selling point he had left. Proudly he lit a match and touched it to one of the gas rings, opening the valve. But nothing happened. He had applied for service and paid the five-dollar deposit, but perhaps had not given sufficient notice. Anyhow, the gas had not been turned on. There was no way to cook the steak and fixings papa had bought that morning. They couldn't even warm up some milk for the baby. Mama took him up in her arms and began to cry that she wanted to go home. The baby began crying too. Papa assured mama that the stove would be working the next day, but she wasn't crying about the stove; that had merely set her off. It wasn't poverty that she minded so much, either. She had known there would be a struggle at first, she said, and though the general situation was worse than she had expected, she could adjust herself to it. "I guess I can even learn to scrub floors. What I can't bear is the thought of spending the rest of my life among such low, uncivilized people."

"You don't know any of them yet," papa said.

"I don't *want* to know people who put their underwear on public display and who throw garbage out of the window!"

"You're a snob," said papa.

Mama gasped and said: "I'm going home with baby on the next boat!"

This became a stock threat. Mama used it on papa for a long while afterward, but only when they had a rather serious tiff. Once she had seen how her brother-in-law lived, she settled down to make the most of what she and papa had.

As a result of his first, abortive attempt at journalism in New York, my father neglected it altogether for two years. He

stuck to house painting, working himself up to a weekly wage of eighteen dollars. Then he got back to journalism—directly through house painting, as it happened.

One of his acquaintances was a man by the name of Shalitt, also a house painter, who knew Jaffe, the business manager of the *Forward*. One day Jaffe called in Shalitt and gave him the job of redecorating the editorial offices. It was too big for Shalitt to handle by himself and he took papa on as a partner. At this time, Liessin was gone. Abraham Cahan had become the editor-in-chief.

Shalitt and my father chipped in for materials and went to work. "It's a funny world," papa said on the job. "Last time I was here, I had hopes of being employed as a writer."

"You're better off as a painter," Shalitt said. "This partnership thing may turn out big. But these pencil-pushers around here—notice how shabby they are? I bet they're all starving."

Papa sighed.

"You still want to be a writer?"

"If they'd only give me a try at it."

"Hmm. Well, maybe I can fix it. But don't blame me if you're sorry later," said Shalitt. During the dickering with the business manager, Shalitt had got to know his way around at the *Forward*. He took my father by the arm and led him straight to Cahan's office. "This man's a good little writer," Shalitt said to the editor-in-chief. "Maybe you can use him. But don't take him away from me until we get through with the painting."

Cahan was willing to be shown, and asked papa to hunt up some labor news. The *Forward* was starting a morning paper to compete with the conservative *Jewish Morning Journal*, and Cahan said that there was room for a good labor reporter on the new staff he was getting together. Papa began hunting around for material, after work. He submitted some pieces at the end of the week. Cahan found them acceptable, and within a month papa had his own desk at the *Forward*.

Jaffe was puzzled. He wondered where he had seen my father before. Working on a piece of copy, papa played dumb. Then Jaffe placed him.

"Aha! First you were *shmeering* with the brush, now you're *shmeering* with the pen!"

"That's right," papa said. "Isn't America a wonderful country?"

PRETTY SOON, papa became a feature writer. Every week he delivered to the *Forward* four human-interest stories, each of two full columns, dealing with life on the lower East Side, in addition to the labor-news reporting, and, also, occasional translations into Yiddish of currently significant articles from Polish and German periodicals.

For turning out about twelve hundred words of copy per day, on the average, papa got a by-line and twelve dollars a week—six dollars less than he had earned at house painting. My mother was proud of him for making good at the writing job, but she didn't like lowering the standard of living to which they had been accustomed. Observing that the by-line buttered no turnips, she began to take in dressmaking, at home, to help make up that six-dollar difference.

At first, papa liked the change from house painting; writing was cleaner work, much less strenuous, physically, and more satisfying as a means of self expression. But then he began to run into difficulties. For one thing, Cahan did not like papa's Yiddish, which he criticised as showing too strong a German influence. He preferred what he called *Yiddisher Yiddish*, that is to say, a more Russian Yiddish, which was what the readers of the *Forward* were accustomed to. In this my father was able to make a satisfactory adjustment in a short time, for he had a good ear and the language was a flexible one.

Less easily adjusted were differences of opinion as to how socialism might best be brought about. The *Forward* backed an organization called the *Yiddisher Arbeiter Bund*. But papa considered it a separatist group, nationalistic in conception, in violation of the whole spirit of Marxism. Here my father was unwilling to make any concessions. He didn't hesitate to protest against the *Forward's* political policies and, also, about the way some of his pieces were being blue-pencilled. He and Cahan had a number of arguments. Cahan said it seemed that house painting had spoiled my father for journalism. Papa answered that to work any longer on the *Forward* would make him feel he was betraying the Cause. He quit, then and there, and went back to house painting.

Financially, this was a sound move, for a second son had been born and there was an extra mouth to feed.

It was spring, a busy season for painters, and papa had no trouble getting a job. He swung a brush pretty contentedly for a few months. But then the slack season came and he was laid off. He got restless and thought of writing again. He didn't want another desk job, though; he wanted to put his writing on a free-lance basis. He explained this to Cahan, and Cahan gave him some special assignments. Papa did several during the summer. Then, in September, when things livened up in the painting business, he went back to that.

BY 1914, there were four sons in the family. Neither free-lance writing nor working as a painter for wages brought in enough money to provide for us as our parents wished, and mama was too busy looking after us to do much dressmaking. So papa decided to go into the contracting business. He was encouraged by a friendly real-estate agent who let him bid on a small job, as a starter. Awarded the contract, papa rented a little shop and hired a few good men, paying them what he felt they were worth, which was something more than union scale.

Almost overnight, it seemed, he became an employer—or, as my mother had it, an exploiter. I was then eight years old and I can remember the arguments.

Before that, when mama got angry with papa, she sometimes called him a dauber. Now she began referring to him as Boss when she was annoyed with him. "Well, Boss," she would say, "how much profit did you sweat out of your workers today?" Then they'd square off for a real argument. It appeared, after fourteen years of marriage, that they needed a new subject. Now they had one, and they did very well with it, for it proved inexhaustible, taking them into politics, where, since neither had any influence on the other, a decision could never be reached.

Papa wasn't getting rich at contracting, but we were better off than we had been, and mama, who felt nothing was too good for her sons, admitted that the new prosperity had its points. But how, she still wanted to know, could papa reconcile the

change in his economic status with his socialist principles?

"I am not responsible for the profit system," papa said, "and I have no choice but to operate under it until the masses wake up." He was vexed with the masses for being so slow about waking up—the basic ideas of socialism were so simple and logical, a child could grasp them—but if the masses had not yet awakened, that did not mean they might not wake up tomorrow or the next day. When they did, he would be the first to rejoice. "Meanwhile, well, I'm going to be a realist."

Mama laughed at that. "He thinks socialism is just around the corner and he calls himself a realist! I, at least, don't fool myself about socialism. I know we'll never see it in our lifetime."

"Then wouldn't it be a foolish martyrdom for me to remain a wage slave?" papa asked. "Don't I do at least a little good, as a 'boss,' by paying my men more than they'd get elsewhere?"

"Behind that," mama said, "there's a guilty conscience. You're still making a profit from other people's labor, and you know in your heart it's an unforgivable sin. I don't see how you can honestly call yourself a socialist any longer."

Papa became infuriated. He declared, loudly enough for the neighbors to hear, that he *was* a socialist, and a damned good one. The trouble with mama, he said, was that she saw things in black and white only, whereas he had an eye for grays.

Actually, my father wasn't happy as an exploiter. He had always identified himself with the proletariat and felt it unseemly not to work with his hands. He often helped with a rush job or with some decorative detail that needed the master's touch.

But when business was slow, the old longing for recognition as a man of ideas would come over him and he would try to appease it with some free-lance writing. For years he was pulled continually back and forth between manual labor and what some of his friends called "making with the pencil." The whole problem was not resolved until much later on, in middle age. Then, discovering rather suddenly that what he had always really wanted to do most was to make pictures, papa dropped house painting and journalism, both, for fine art.

CEDARS OF LEBANON

THE SITUATION OF THE HEBREWS

A Jewish Apologist of 17th-Century Venice

SIMONE LUZZATTO

RABBI SIMONE (SIMHAH) BEN ISAAC LUZZATTO (1583-1663), early member of a noted Italian Jewish family that was to produce many a distinguished figure after him, was born, lived, and died in Venice, where he sat on the rabbinical collegium. He acquired a humanistic as well as rabbinical education, and had the learning of the Renaissance at his finger-tips. A rationalist of the new type, he championed Maimonides against the Cabala, wrote a treatise in Italian on the compatability of faith with science (*Socrate*, 1651), and is said to have written a Hebrew work, no longer extant, to refute the arguments of the Karaites (*Debar Shemuel*).

The book of which we print an excerpt below—translated into English for the first time by Felix Giovanelli—is called *Discorso circa il Stato degli Ebrei* ("Discourse on the Situation of the Hebrews"). It represents one of the first attempts, if not the very first, to frame Jewish apologetics in other than theological dimensions. Luzzatto's rationalism, in that early day, emboldened him to arguments whose unabashed "materialism" would shock present-day rabbis. He was the first, Jew or Gentile, to take a cool and sober look at the position of the Jews in Europe and draw up a balance sheet of assets and liabilities in social, economic, and political terms.

Concerned to protect the situation of Jews in his own city of Venice, Luzzatto points out, in the first chapters of his *Discorso*, the benefits they bring as traders to the Venetian economy, and the indispensability of trade to civilization. He argues that Jewish affluence is not a threat to the state and the surrounding population because the Jews have no country of their own to which to transfer their wealth. Nor do they

aspire to political or social power in the countries where they now reside, being submissive, law-abiding, and without spirit. Yet the only way Luzzatto can explain to himself and others why the King of Spain expelled a people so beneficial to his realm as the Jews is to decide that they must have plotted against him—here Luzzatto's argument rests on the conclusion that Jews, being of such great benefit to a country, must not be given cause to turn against it. Moreover, no earthly prince, Luzzatto suggests, would be so suspicious as to punish a whole people for the crimes of some of its members.

Because of the expenses incurred in supporting the large families enjoined upon them by their sexual morality, Jews cannot hoard and withdraw their money from circulation, or amass huge fortunes. Nor do they offer any threat to the dominant religion, since their own does not urge them to seek proselytes—and in any case their political weakness causes them to be pusillanimous and deferential to the customs and beliefs of non-Jews.

ALL this is, obviously, apologetics; but it is also self-criticism. And Luzzatto goes further in the same vein by pointing out the indifference of most Jews to manners and secular learning caused by narrow preoccupation with their personal affairs, which is dictated in turn by the handicaps under which they are forced to live. On the other hand, Jews are steadfast in their faith, go to extremes in the punctilious observance of their religion, show admirable fortitude under adversity—if not courage in the face of danger—and maintain unwavering solidarity with their co-religionists, despite individual geographical or cultural differences (differences that make it so hard to characterize

the Jews as a whole). Moreover, Jews have a remarkable capacity for complex tasks, are largely immune to carnal vices, and keep their blood pure. "Their errors," says Luzzatto, "tend to be somewhat abject and mean rather than anything savage and grand."

As Yitzchak Fritz Baer indicates in his *Galut* (Bücherei des Schocken Verlags, No. 61, shortly to be published here in an English translation), Luzzatto's views were a product of the first wave of Enlightenment, the Renaissance wave; he takes his criteria from the Bible, philosophy, and the humanistic sciences, but not from Rabbinical lore—which is the essential Jewish tradition in the *Galut*. The second wave of Enlightenment, that of the 18th century (*the*

Enlightenment), finds less of a positivist, "materialist" echo among Jewish apologists, and more of a philosophical and idealist-theological one—compare, only, Moses Mendelssohn with Luzzatto. According to Dr. Baer, the national consciousness with which Luzzatto described the Jews does not appear again until recent times, in the secular Hebrew literature that originated in 19th-century Russia.

This short discussion by no means exhausts the significance of the *Discorso*. The excerpt that follows is taken from its middle chapters; and a second excerpt, from later chapters—which will appear in COMMENTARY's next number—will deal with the historical destiny of the Jews.—Ed.

Consideration XI

Of the difficulties of a universal definition of the customs of the Jews, and how readily susceptible of correction their delinquencies are.

... OUR soul is compounded for the most part of divers and dissimilar pieces, each of which upon varying occasions presents its peculiar semblance; whence it arises that to describe the nature and condition of one single man is a thing most arduous and difficult, the more so if we insist upon referring all his acts to one Criterion and Idea.

It is for that reason that so many Authors have treated of the nature of Dogs, Horses, and Falcons; and with great exactitude have espied their customs and conditions; and that so few have treated of Man, and then, only most obliquely. Who among these hath best discoursed on men was Theophrastus, Aristotle's disciple. Reserving such an undertaking for his last years, viz., when he had become an octogenarian, he, most observant of the Characters of the human spirit, compiled a treatise in the Historical manner, of which only a fragment has come down to us, the rest having been abolished by the outrages of Time.

If it be so hazardous to define the inner uses of a single human being, of what must we not be capable in giving definition to those of a whole People? Especially of the Hebrew Nation, so dispersed over the Orb that it is impossible to affirm anything certain and stable concerning it. Strewn over the Universe, and like unto streams flowing

through long tracts of countryside, whose waters are modified by the qualities of the divers terrains through which they must pass, the Jews do likewise acquire various customs from the other Nations in whose midst they dwell. On this account, a great divergence exists between the Venetian and the Constantinopolitan Jew, between the latter and the Damascan Jew or the Jew from Cagliari, and between all these and German or Polish Jews.

If, however, we should still desire to inquire into the usages of this people as a whole (*in universale*), it might be said that they are a Nation of very abased spirit, weak, inept in their present state for all Political government, immersed in their private interests, and little concerned, indeed not at all, for their universal interests. Distinguished by a parsimony verging on Avarice, ardent admirers of antiquity, poor observers of the present course of things, many of them uncultivated in their ways, little turned to Doctrines, imperfectly learned in languages, they are given, in the opinion of observers, to a meticulousness bordering on excess when it comes to observing their Law.

To which defects can be counterpoised other qualities meriting some observation, to wit, an inexpressible firmness and tenacity in the belief and observation of their Religion, a uniformity of dogmas concerning their Faith, in the course of the 1550 years that they have been scattered over the planet; admirable constancy, if not in confronting danger, at least in bearing up under calamities; a singular knowledge of Holy

Writ and its interpretations; human charity and hospitality toward any member of their People, even though a Stranger and a Foreigner. Uniformity of Religion subsisting amongst them, a Persian and an Italian Jew can pity and commiserate with each other; remoteness in space can occasion no disunion amongst them. Most abstinent in the matter of carnal vices, they are obedient and scrupulous in preserving their racial stock unmixed and undefiled. Many amongst them are skilled in treating all manner of difficult affairs; and they show humbleness and respect toward all whatsoever who stand outside their Religion. Their errors and delinquencies partake in most cases of the humble and even abject rather than of the atrocious and enormous.

FOR which reason, if it happen (as often it is wont to happen amongst any Nation) that one of their number commit a crime and transgress the edicts of the Prince, the remedy, the medicament, is always at hand. The vices of the soul are like unto the infirmities of our body, which are divisible into two classes: some, though most grave and pernicious, a simple Doctor, by ordinary purges and evacuations, suffices to overcome and vanquish; but others are of more malign quality, which being contagious and communicable, oblige the very Sovereign to combat them by quarantines and prohibitions, and even to accompany these by the threat of supreme penalties.

Thus, amongst wicked actions are some which, albeit abominable, have for their scope but one's own pleasure and private profit; and having no point of diffusion and communication, but, rather, being restricted to a few guilty souls, these last do not desire (nor does it accord with their own profit and self-interest) that their wicked acts should prove contagious to others. For which reason, once they are discovered, ordinary Magistrates suffice to correct and to expel such evils, by common chastisements and penalties such as exile, prison, the galleys, mutilation of offending limb, and even death.

Such like enormities have been committed in all times by members of all Nations under the spur of greed or similar abject qualities. But there are certain execrable acts that are contagious by nature, and which, spreading, penetrate a People through and through; in

fact, it is not possible to put such wickedness into practice save by means of a total conspiracy, such as must involve the felony of a whole People, a change of Religion, the invasion of Cities, rebellion against every civil order and condition. Which excesses are the more frightful and terrible, for that the very tortures and penalties invoked are esteemed as rewards by the guilty, as a glorious recompense for their activity; and rather than flee death with horror, they oft go to it rejoicing, as in the case of those who would vindicate Liberty or change Religion.

In the instance of the Worship of the Golden Calf, though not all had in fact participated in that outrage, no more than in Korah's rebellion against Moses, yet the Lord did will a universal chastisement, which came to pass by reason of that judgment according to which all have a proclivity and readiness for such excesses. The which never proved necessary for other sins, for God hath ever distinguished amongst the delinquencies and errors of each member of the Nation. In those cases afore mentioned in which the usual remedies administered by subaltern Magistrates are insufficient, the Sovereign is obligated to intervene from the eminence of his own Majesty and supreme authority, bringing about the extermination of evil by a general effusion of blood, or at least by universal banishment.

The wicked acts of the Hebrew Nation were never of so pernicious a nature, either in the City of Venice or elsewhere in the some 1550 years that have elapsed. It is indeed true that in the annals of the Ancient Historians can be read accounts of certain commotions of the Hebrew Nation, which, following upon the time of Trajan, took place in Alexandria and some time later in Cyprus, but this was at a time when the Hebrews were participants in the Government of the City and were fresh from the Captivity enforced by Titus, whence they still retained some traces of their original ferocity. Nor can it be sustained that in our day the King of Spain hath resorted to that rigorous and total expulsion of the exceedingly numerous Granadan people, so rich in Husbandmen and Artisans, because of a theft, murder, or private delinquency committed by some fifteen or twenty of them, the which would not have justified a resolution so injurious to his Kingdoms and so

astounding to the world; for assuredly, the inner motives of so severe a decree must have been some secret conspiracy by him discovered which had wormed its way throughout the Granadan Nation, and hence merited slaughter rather than exile; and there can be no doubt whatsoever that to condemn the whole because of the part is against Nature and Divine Precept.

There is no perfection so excellent in this world that does not often carry thereunto annexed and engrafted some Evil that lends itself to iniquitous Abuses. Iron, which is of such exceeding utility and affords a material for divers Tools necessary to human life, oftentimes is a means to murder and carnage. Speech which so ennoble our Kind is oft the cause of misfortune and ruin. But notwithstanding, never was there Legislator so scrupulous that he prohibited the excavation and extraction of iron from Mines or laid human discourse under a ban. And as for the documents of Holy Writ, we find that even though the crimes of the inhabitants of Pentapolis had reached the very Apex of wickedness and enormity, it pleased God that the innocence of five men should ward off the scourges that so numerous a People merited. None the more can a handful of delinquents in a Nation suffice to justify the provocation of public indignation against the whole of it.

Consideration XII

Of the opposition to the Hebrews by three classes of persons, and its resolution.

THE Hebrew Nation is harassed and oppressed by three classes of Persons: Religious Zealots; Politicians and Statesmen; the commonalty and the vulgar. The Zealots claim that it is a contemning of Religion itself to allow within a State those who have not given assent to the Religion commonly professed. Unto whom it is easily answered that they would do well to moderate the Zeal of their pious minds, seeing that the Supreme Head of the Christian Religion in the City of his own Residence hath allowed the Hebrews, for these past 800 years, to remain in that City and enjoy a stable Domicile there; and in a spirit of supreme justice and charity to be governed and upheld in their rights; wherefore it is not thinkable that in matters of Religion anyone should presume to know more than its Head.

The Politicians affirm that a diversity of Religions in a same City is not suitable, because of the scandal and bad example that each may manifest for the other; to say nothing of dissensions, disunity, and hatreds that may spring up amongst the inhabitants of that self-same City.

In the first instance, they may be answered that scandal and bad example cannot arise, by reason of the scant communication betwixt Hebrew and Christian, and of the divergence of their Ritual and of the languages in which their Books are composed. Add to this the prohibitions under which both sides lie, against living in one another's society; the prohibitions, especially, that mark the observances of the Jews in the tasting of many viands, which are not allowed in conformity to their religious customs; to say nothing of those having to do with carnal intercourse, which apart from the prohibitions of their own law, is likewise regulated by the Sovereign's edicts, the transgressions of which are most severely punished; and finally, the impotence and the subjection of the Hebrews brings it about that those not of their Religion shun and flee them; and hence it is rare that outsiders are converted to their Beliefs.

As for discord and dissension, it can be answered that Hebrews and Christians are not contraries like Black and White, which, both belonging to the genus of color, will not abide each other, but rather like Sweet and Red, which, being completely apart and non-communicant except under the most general genus of Quality, may subsist side by side in the same object, and are so found. In such a wise are Christians and Hebrews divided and removed from one another; rarely do they vie and dispute for reasons of Religion. This is all the truer, since, in virtue of the conditions of the moment and of his principal institutes, all thought of propagating and spreading his Religion is alien to the Jew, being preoccupied solely to vanquish his necessities and urgencies; and he does not aspire in any manner to better his universal lot, to attempt which would surely be reported to the Magistrates and lead to extreme penalties.

ANOTHER evil is adduced by Politicians against the [Hebrew] Nation, which is the pursuit of usury, a crime not only con-

demned by Divine Law, but universally forbidden by the civil order as destructive of possessions and subversive of the family, whence the Poet: "*Hinc usura vorax avidumque in tempore fenus* (by voracious usury and greedy interest to calamity led)." To such an imputation it can be retorted that the usury practiced by the Jews is tolerated by civil laws rather than expressly allowed and conceded (as will be explained in the sequel); but, more than this, it may be affirmed with great probability that most rare are those who sustain themselves upon usury. The domestic expenses of the Jews being very considerable, it is scarcely convincing that they could support themselves by a pursuit that is neither allowed nor conceded by the laws of the Sovereign. Beyond that, it lies not in the power of the Jew at any time to constrain the Christian to the redemption of his goods; and once he hath employed his capital he must needs await the pleasure and convenience of the Christian in redeeming his pledges. And if the *Monti di Pietà* [state pawnbroking offices under Papal and Episcopal sponsorships at the time] of Padua, Vicenza, and Verona, which have hundreds of thousands of ducats engaged in the service of the needy, could not, at the end of a year, sell their pawns, they would straightway be destitute of Money, with all their Capital embroiled and illiquid. Therefore it is not likely that the Jews, who, compared to the *Monti di Pietà*, are of mediocre wealth and possessions, could long endure and bear up under circumstances even more disadvantageous.

I venture to hold up for consideration by men wise in the ways of the world that celebrated saying of Tacitus concerning the banishment of Diviners and Astrologists from the City of Rome, "*quod in civitate nostra, & vetabitur semper & retenebitur* (which will ever be condemned yet still practiced in our City)"; in this light should usury be judged, a sin ever condemned but in every time and place practiced, forasmuch as two major stimuli flowing from our frailty concur to it: the necessity of the borrower, who contributes the usury, and the insatiable greed of the lender, who receives it. If such a transgression should not be committed by the Hebrews, others would not be lacking, perhaps, who, by greater extortions of the needy would carry on that depraved pursuit. In

this connection, he who, wishing to stigmatize the [Hebrew] Nation, called it the Hold and Cloaca of every filthy transaction, perhaps signified by this reproachful calumny Necessity and Urgency, the Hold and the Cloaca being very essential to the Ship and the sumptuous Palace. This I do not say by way of defending such practices, but only to demonstrate that such enormities, and others for that matter, are not uniquely the property of the Hebrews as many so presumptuously aver, but rather accidents consequent upon the hardships of life and the prevailing conditions of the times.

TO THE vulgar it is easy to suggest, most convincingly, all manner of calumny and slander contrived through hatred of the [Hebrew] Nation. Did the vulgar have any capacity for learning, they could be admonished to read the ancient Doctors and Historians who, like Tacitus amongst the Pagans and Tertullian amongst the Christians, treated of the events befalling the first Christians. They would then observe what false imputations were fastened upon innocent people; and it could be conjectured that the same could now easily befall the Hebrews, did the ill-wishers of that Nation have their way.

The first (Tacitus) relates that pitiless Nero, having put the City of Rome to the torch because moved by the ambition to rebuild it according to a better conception, designed to discharge the hatred conceived by the People against him upon the Innocent Christians of that time; this by accusing them libellously of having committed the misdeed. He condemned them to be set on fire after having been dipped in pitch and sulphur, and to be placed on the Public streets of the destroyed City that they might serve as street lights and lanterns for the Roman People.

The second (Tertullian) bitterly defended his people against the mendacious accusation of infanticide, according to which they used the blood of innocent children in the celebration of their ceremonies. So incredible an imposture, destitute of all probability, was later to give rise amongst the Jews to tragical experiences, especially in the lands to the North of the Alps. Yet the same defence employed by the Eloquent Doctor might still serve our unhappy Nation, especially

when it is considered that our Religious usages enjoin us to abstain from tasting of the blood of brute animals; and much less can it be a question of human blood.

To credit public Gossip and vulgar Noises is to venture one's faith in a reckless Rabble, one's belief in unreliable witnesses. To defend itself against the outrages of Time and acquire new weight and vigor, Truth itself is wont to avail itself of the trappings of popular report; in the manner of those women, who that they might step forth in greater majesty appear shod with raised soles and heels; and of still others who, to season their speech and give it fragrance, mingle with it such a pleasing aroma as the lie. . . .

It cannot be doubted that the Hebrew Nation is subjected, amongst other calamities, to Libels and Infamies, more so than any other, by reason of the impunity enjoyed by their calumniators. They often mix truth and falsehood, thereby achieving the pernicious invectives that all know, and that demand such careful wit to separate if the real is to be distinguished from the imposture. And if unaffected nature rejects corrupt humors to the weaker parts of our bodies, all the more, it may be supposed, do men, overwrought by passions and perturbed humors, seek to discharge upon the weaker in body and mind their reproaches and slanders. But, moreover, whilst they heap upon the Hebrews the gravest and most intolerable crimes, and affirm them as notorious fact, they not only insult the Hebrews but tacitly censure the diligent foresight of the Sovereign; this, by implying that with their Bats' eyes they can outvie the Lynx-eyed vision of the Prince, who never neglecting his inquiries, examines and meditates the most hidden and abstruse acts of his subjects. In what manner can it be sustained that they, unto whom it doth not pertain to know the misdeeds of Hebrews, are so well-informed; whilst that civil power which ought to have such knowledge and such information is yet so ill-informed?

Especially because of the press of their [the Hebrews'] quarters and the openness of their private life, it is impossible that wicked acts should not be discovered and observed by neighbors, and hence readily revealed to the Magistracy, under the spur of rewards and the stimulation of hatred and vying emulation, to which passions the He-

brews are subject no less than other Peoples. From these considerations, it follows that the calumniators would do well to relinquish their curiosity, deeding it over to the sober and established powers of public government, and to take for an indubitable maxim that what is not observed and castigated by the Sovereign in the wake of such clamorous accusations must needs be a vain fiction and brazen falsehood.

IESTEEM the most improbable of all libels to be that one which affirms that the Jews of Venice keep the Pirates of Barbary informed of the sailings of Vessels from the City, thereby sharing in their booty. The which can be shown on various grounds to be an idle invention. For what commerce, what confidence, can the Jews enjoy amongst the Corsairs, if mighty Princes and Monarchs have never been able to conclude any pact or convention with them? Or if, concluding which, they were not a long time in being undeceived? In what manner can advices come into the hands of these Pirates, if there be no route of passage regularly plied betwixt Venetia and Barbary?

The Nests of the Corsairs are Four, viz., Tripoli, Tunis, Bizerta, and Algiers. With Tripoli there can be no communication whatsoever, if it not be by way of Zante and Morea [Greece], or Malta, which would require thirty days or so of sailing. It would be necessary to have these advices reach the two places mentioned by sea way, or have them sent to Malta overland, and thence carried to Tripoli. How dubious the maritime route is, everyone well knows. It would be necessary to fit out speedy Vessels and then sail back in time to meet the mercantile Vessels, all the while knowing where they might be encountered. To send advices to Tunis, either Leghorn or Malta must first be reached, and thence Tunis has to be reached by sea way; in which case, the same difficulties attendant upon the Tripoli route would be encountered. Bizerta fits galleys out only, and embarks upon one single expedition each year in the Summer season. Even so, its depredations are customarily confined to the Lands. They can seize Vessels only by accidental Incursions, for they are in no fit position to lurk on the open sea, in view of the awkwardness of having such numbers of sailors to man their oars and

because their light Galleys are not made to withstand the fury of the Sea. As for Algiers, in addition to the disadvantages just set forth in the cases of Tunis and Tripoli, there is its great distance from the Levant; wherefore they most seldom venture in our Seas and limit their activities to the Straits [Gibraltar], or, at most, venture out to the edge of the Western Ocean.

I do not know, either, why the Corsairs should be disposed to share their booty with the Jews, considering that of themselves they are able to keep informed of the movements of Vessels and their sailing times from Venice. Who is that Mariner so Inexperienced who cannot discover for himself that the Northwest Wind wont to blow in the Summer carries Italian Vessels to Southern parts and the Levant? And how many must they [the pirates] not have in the way of Christian slaves and Renegades, practical Pilots, experienced Steersmen, who can give any information they wish concerning Venetian navigation and lead them at will to any site or Port whatsoever—and all this with no necessity of rewarding the Jews with a share of their profits or earnings? Again, when it is considered that many Vessels are in some measure laden with the goods of Jews, it

becomes incredible to suppose that Jews should deliver into the hands of Barbarous and Unbelieving Pirates the possessions of relatives and friends in order later to retrieve them, meanwhile running so manifest a danger and risking so certain a loss. Rather would Jews themselves turn informers to avert such damage at their own expense.

Nor is it more convincing to affirm that the Jews are persuaded to commit such crimes because spurred by the hope of trafficking in a cheap market of mercantile booty. For it is a notorious fact that in the places already cited there is often a numerous concourse of Frenchmen, Englishmen, and Flemings, as well as their Consuls-Resident and accredited representatives, who putting in regularly with their Vessels laden with provisions and wares (and I say nothing of Italians, Genovese, and Livornese) are ready for any transaction. For which reason, when booty arrives, the Hebrews may hope least of all those present to chance upon an opportunity for a good investment, being less numerous and less wealthy.

From the improbability of this imputation the Prudent Reader will be enabled to argue the flimsiness of many another directed at that unhappy Nation and fastened upon it.

FINAL JUDGMENT

YEHOASH

Each of them attained to a single clod,
Now will He all the grasses gather;
Some there were that made attempt to stammer,
And now will He say the Great Word aloud.

On the blinded ways wanderers did creep,
And at every turn there was an audacious print;
Now will He, the Last One and the Master,
Double them all in one winning sweep.

And there will hang upon His citadels
A blessing, silent as a rainbow;
Blessed be the dead and unquicken'd roe,
The luckless hand, and the steps that fail!

YEHOASH (Solomon Bloomgarden—1870-1927) is well known as a modern Yiddish poet. The present poem was published in the *Zukunft* in 1927 (after the author's death) under the title, "Degrees." It is here translated by JACOB SLOAN.

THE STUDY OF MAN

THE "ALIENATION" OF MODERN MAN

Some Diagnoses of the Malady

NATHAN GLAZER

IF, as Sidney Hook wrote recently, the two great semantic beacons of our time are the terms "transition" and "crisis," then a third term is perhaps necessary to capture the special quality of *this* transition and *this* crisis. That term—the third semantic beacon—is "alienation." It expresses a unique facet of the crisis of our times: the widespread belief that there has been a revolutionary change in the psychological condition of man, reflected in the individual's feeling of isolation, homelessness, insecurity, restlessness, anxiety.

It is not hard to find evidence of the agonized awareness that man's presumed oneness with his fellows and with the world is no more: of a sense of the splitting asunder of what was once together, the breaking of the seamless mould in which values, behavior, expectations, were once cast into interlocking forms. Housman's plaintive lines, "a stranger and afraid, in a world I never made," appear in a hundred guises in titles, articles, books, and book reviews, a spontaneous mass projection of an underlying discomfort. The life and works of the most widely-discussed writers of our time (Joyce, Kafka, Proust) are interpreted by critics as paradigms of alienation. The re-establish-

ment of the unity of medieval life becomes one of the most popular goals of modern intellectuals, together with, on the part of others, the establishment of a new unity through the replacing of modern complex forms of social organization (Paul Goodman, Dwight Macdonald). Perhaps half of the twelve contributors to this magazine's series on "The Crisis of the Individual," though they represent a variety of traditions and disciplines, have interpreted it as a crisis caused by alienation. And while theologians (Reinhold Niebuhr, for example) see alienation as a *permanent* condition of man, and not peculiarly a modern problem, the widespread appeal their theories have achieved just at this time might indicate the contrary.

In this problem, as in others, there is an interesting interplay between "science" and "art," objectivity and intuition. In the case of alienation, we have one problem that was raised first by social science, and which the writers—or at least the critics—have been relatively late in discovering. In one form or another, Marx, Durkheim, Veblen, Weber, Tönnies, Simmel, Cooley, G. H. Mead, were aware of the existence of a psychological problem related in some way to the shift from a "simple" to a "complex" society (they labeled these two poles of social organization differently, but I think they had the same phenomena in mind). They framed terms and ideas for the better understanding of this psychological revolution—"anomie," "mechanical" and "organic" solidarity, "primary" and "secondary" group relations, "traditional" and "rational" society, "*Gemeinschaft*" and "*Gesellschaft*." As a result, sociologists, too, take part in the growing chorus that discusses alienation—what it is, what has caused it, what can be done about it.

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We propose to examine here a number of recent articles by sociologists bearing in one way or another on alienation. The specific contributions of psychoanalysts, theologians, literary critics, novelists, artists have been temporarily left aside—not to mention the fact that the most promising contributions of sociology itself, in the work of such men as C. Wright Mills on the white-collar worker and Robert K. Merton on a housing-project community, have not yet been published.

DANIEL BELL, of the College of the University of Chicago, begins his article "A Parable of Alienation" (*Jewish Frontier*, November 1946) by retelling an incident from Koestler's book on Spain: awaiting capture by the Fascists on a hill outside Malaga, Koestler is suddenly aware only of his presence on that hill on a bright sunny day: everything else—the war, his imminent danger—seems remote and unreal. "Most living today," Mr. Bell continues, "has that blank awareness that gripped Koestler. The men at war had a constant feeling of what am I doing here, where did all this come from? . . . that feeling is not a transient but a fundamental experience of our time. People move about, in the huge caverns that modern technology has constructed, with little sense of relationship to meaningful events. . . . This quality of being lost is the most pervasive symptom of the alienation of modern man."

Behind this symptom, and explaining it in Mr. Bell's view (he leans heavily on the work of Professor Benjamin Nelson of the University of Chicago, and Max Weber), is the breakdown of a simpler way of life. The earlier pattern was characterized by an intimate relation with others—a relation based on seeing them as kin, not as strangers; spontaneous acts of work and play which were their own reward; adherence to traditional moral values that gave meaning to life. But "emerging capitalism found that 'brotherhood,' or the traditional ways, hindered the rational pursuit of economic ends." The attack on the traditional values, with their "irrational" distinction between the "brother" (the member of the kin-group—family, clan, tribe) and the "other" (the outsider), was carried on in alliance with another moral code: that of the Protestant ethic, which glorified rational economic activity regardless of whether it was directed against brother or other. In time, this religious justification of the ascetic devotion to work for the glory of God gave way

to a "naturalistic" justification of unrestricted pursuit of economic gain for the greater comfort of man.

Whatever the justification, the opening of the restricted, sacred area of inner family relations, in which tradition had hitherto ruled, to that aggressiveness, predatory and otherwise, which had previously been directed only outward, has had a devastating effect on man. The rational organization and transformation of society for the exploitation of nature and man (modern technology, the division of labor, vast enterprises, industrial cities, business and political bureaucracies) has banished brotherhood and brotherly relations from the functioning of modern society. But man yearns desperately for their restoration. "That yearning has been skillfully realized by the Nazis in their call for *Gemeinschaft*, by the Communists in their cry for *Comradeship*. However warped, these doctrines are an affirmation of the need for brotherhood which the world has denied." In short, the destruction of the cosy nest, the kinship group, in which men once lived out their lives and in which spontaneous personal relations were possible, is at the root of the experience of alienation.

Within this larger framework Bell presents the specific drama of the alienation of the young Jewish intellectual of immigrant family. Here too, there is the contrast between the warm, intimate hearth and the outer world. But his psychological wounds are not caused so much by the invasion of the domain of brotherhood by the principle of otherhood: rather, they are caused by the need to find a place in a different world—the Gentile world. This leads him to question the assumptions and values incorporated in the ritual and accepted behavior of traditional Jewish family life (the rejection of the assumptions means the rejection of unconditional love). And the Jewish intellectual is also affected by the way in which the outer world reacts upon and transforms the world in which he grew up. Significantly, the same story is told in Irving Howe's "The Lost Young Intellectual," in the October 1946 COMMENTARY: even the same holiday, Passover, is evoked as a "manifestation of the concreteness of family love" spoken of by Mr. Bell.

BUT is the alienation experienced by people in general under modern capitalism really the same thing as the alienation felt by the

individual Jewish intellectual? The two processes of alienation, superficially quite similar, are, it seems to me, actually very different. First, note that the general process of alienation, as Mr. Bell describes it, stretches over a lengthy and indeterminate time-span: it certainly goes as far back as the Protestant revolution, and perhaps as far back as Neolithic society—for only there, after all, did the contrast between brother and other exhibit its pristine sharpness.

The specific process of Jewish alienation here under consideration is much more limited historically. It came into existence only when the Jewish family left the ghetto and was transplanted into Western culture. When we come to the children of the second generation of immigrants in America, Messrs. Bell's and Howe's analysis already does not hold. It is true, of course, that as long as they are considered an alien body in society, no matter how attenuated their cultural differences, Jews will, to some extent, be alienated and view society from the outside. Nevertheless, in the acculturated second-generation family, the chief key to the psychological processes involved is no longer the conflict between the culture of the immigrant family and that of the outside world.

It seems to me that the problem on which Messrs. Bell and Howe have focused is a passing phase of acculturation: a problem of transition, the intensity of which the passage of time must reduce.

It is when the larger problem of alienation begins to operate upon the perfectly acculturated (or "assimilated") descendants of immigrants—even those who came over on the Mayflower—that they begin to feel the poignancy of being lost, of their inability to form lasting intimate relationships, to recapture brotherhood. For the fact is—and this point is not made as clearly as it might be in Mr. Bell's presentation—that the larger problem of alienation which he discusses is not created by the transition as such from a simple to a complex society, but by the *social structure itself*, what we call contemporary capitalism. After all, the transition itself was completed in the chief centers of Western culture one or two centuries ago, yet we feel that the psychological problems of society are only now reaching a crescendo of intensity. Thus it may well be that the chief element in the alienation felt by the Jew is the homelessness felt by all men in our giant industrial system.

There are, then, two kinds of alienation in Mr. Bell's discussion. One is the alienation of *passage* from one culture to another, or from one form of social life to another; this is the less severe form, and the completion of the cultural passage signifies its disappearance. The other is a *systemic* alienation involved in modern social organization as we know it: complex, large-scale industrial society (not "capitalist" society as such, perhaps; the same problems may exist in Russia). We need to explain just how our society in its present mature form operates to burden its members, *even though it is the only society they have known all their lives*, with the most devastating psychological disabilities. If we approach alienation in this way, it becomes, paralleling the case of hysteria, less a description of a single specific *symptom* than an omnibus of psychological disturbances having a similar root cause—in this case, modern social organization.

It is this form of alienation that has been brilliantly handled by Arnold W. Green, of the University of Pennsylvania, in a series of articles which have recently appeared in psychological and sociological journals. ("The Middle-Class Male Child and Neurosis," *American Sociological Review*, February 1946; "The Sociological Analysis of Fromm and Horney," *American Journal of Sociology*, May 1946; "Social Values and Psychotherapy," *Journal of Personality*, March 1946. Earlier articles directly relevant to our main theme are: "The 'Cult of Personality' and Sexual Relations," *Psychiatry*, August 1941, and "Duplicity," *Psychiatry*, November 1943.)

Mr. Green is by no means unique in his approach: it is by now a commonplace to say that psychological disturbances must be related to factors in the social order; and the works of Karen Horney, who has popularized this approach, have become best-sellers. But the question remains of finding out *just how* modern life produces alienation or neurosis, of tracing its strains and stresses in their different impacts on different groups in society. As Mr. Green says in his criticism of the work of Erich Fromm—who, in that modern classic, *Escape from Freedom*, explained the psychological condition of modern man by the breakdown of medieval primary ties: "The Protestant ethic, with all it implies, was of unquestionable significance as a causal link in the development of the modern obsession with wealth and

success. But in itself it is inadequate to explain that development, and it is certainly inadequate to explain, as a *directly channeled historical development*, any putative psychological condition of 'modern man.'"

Mr. Green points out that the Protestant ethic has undergone many and varied vicissitudes in the four hundred years of its existence. In America, where it was coupled with the frontier tradition, it worked quite differently than in England and Germany. It is not enough, Mr. Green concludes, to relate the psychological state of people today to a *general* cultural background: "Since individuals interact within a small segment of a differentiated society, and are inoculated with the specialized values of their various segments as well as the general-cultural values," it is the analysis of the typical experience of individuals in *each of those segments* that is necessary if we are to get to the specific causes of alienation or neurosis. (Mr. Green uses the term *neurosis*; we can equate it with *alienation* for our purposes, since he applies it, as we do alienation, to the whole body of psychological disabilities that can be understood through social structure.)

IN HIS article "The Middle Class Male Child and Neurosis," Mr. Green carries through the analysis of one of these social segments—the white, native-born, urban, Protestant, college-educated middle class—with a precision remarkable for its isolation of specific causal factors. One of its chief merits is its astute detailed description of the mechanisms of child-rearing by which our society mass-produces the "alienated" personality of our era.

The father in a family of this social segment is characteristically a white-collar worker. "As a salesman, office worker, minor bureaucrat, or professional man, his job techniques revolve around manipulating the personality of others, instead of tools. . . . He tries to use his associates as means to further his career; in fact, he has himself been conditioned to view his associates, education, hobbies, intellectual interests, in terms of their possible value to his career. . . . He has, then, a well-developed tendency to view his relations with others in terms of what he, as a mobile, displaced [in the sense of having no fixed status] person can get out of them.

"Yet the modern middle-class father cannot use his child either in the new sense of manipulating others to his own advantage, nor, be it

noted, in the ways available to him in the past."

The child cannot be put to work on the farm, or sent into a factory to add to the family's income. Nor can it any longer be considered as a form of insurance against old age. On the other hand, the demands of the child on the parents, and the liabilities it represents for them, have become enormous. It requires funds for an ever-lengthening period of education and preparation to fit it for the rigors of middle-class life, and these expenditures come at a time when all the father's energy and funds should be going into his career. The child interferes with the pursuit of pleasure—seen by Mr. Green, as by Mr. Bell, as a prime value in modern life—because modern, commercialized recreation is designed for the individual or couple, not for the family. The child interferes with the roles of husbands and wives as companions, which now increasingly replace their older roles as patriarchal father and housewife-mother (such roles lose their meaning outside the framework of a family economy—the family farm, the family workshop, the family business). The spread of scientific child-care techniques brings with it further heavy duties and responsibilities toward the child, and further curbs the traditional rights of parents.

The modern middle-class mother is said to have gained "freedom" because **she now has** a variety of careers open to her, and because gadgets have reduced household drudgery. But the very fact that she has been taught to see a career as possible for her, and the fact that marriage and children generally mean giving it up, creates a new conflict and a new source of regret and frustration. And the training of middle-class women for careers, half-hearted though it is (how secondary to marriage this career business is in the minds of middle-class parents is wonderfully demonstrated in an article by Mirra Komarovsky, "Cultural Contradictions and Sex Roles," *American Journal of Sociology*, November 1946), leaves them technically and psychologically unprepared for household tasks. The Victorian or peasant housewife found her work "part of a well-integrated system of household and community activities"; for the modern middle-class housewife, such tasks become increasingly unbearable because they are isolated from social activities and have no valued place in her ideals. By and large, the modern woman has no respect for herself in the role of a housewife.

"And so it is inevitable that the child shall be viewed with some degree of ambivalence by both father and mother, for he represents a direct interference with most of the dominant values and compulsions of the modern middle class: career, social and economic success, hedonistic enjoyment."

IN SUCH a situation, Green argues, the child undergoes a process of "personality absorption": "physical and emotional blanketing of the child, bringing about a slavish dependence on the parents." For "the mother has little to do, in or out of the home; she is her single child's constant companion. Modern 'scientific child care' enforces a constant supervision and diffused worrying over the child's health . . . [and] ego development." (Even the play group is at first, in an urban setting, dominated by the mothers.) When we realize that the child can only form his conception of himself on the basis of others' images of him, and his absorption of those images, and that the only significant image that he possesses is that gained from his mother and father, we begin to see what the modern middle-class family has done to change personality. By preventing the child from acquiring a variety of images of himself from varied sources, it prevents the growth of an independent self. In such a context, says Mr. Green, the demand for the restoration of "spontaneity" may be meaningless—there is nothing spontaneous to be restored.

The other significant factor in personality absorption is what Green calls the "love-complex of our time." Love is now considered—for various reasons—almost the only valid relationship between men and women, parents and children. Parents no longer receive any economic benefit from their children, or any feeling of fulfilling cosmic law or supernatural commands; love then becomes their sole reason for having children. This heightened "love," and their awareness of how much they have given up for their children, makes them feel justified in demanding in compensation their children's love. Current writers on child problems assume that love is a *biological* necessity. Green denies this: "The child's need for love is experienced precisely because he has been conditioned to need it" (and to feel that no other attitude towards his parents will compensate them for their sacrifices).

What more effective discipline of the child, in this situation, than the threat of withdraw-

ing love? "To the extent that a child's personality has been absorbed, he will be thrown into a panic by this sort of treatment, and develop guilt-feelings to prevent further trouble." (And "trouble" in the urban-apartment environment is so defined as to include the child's normal motor and exploratory activity.)

Personality absorption in itself is not neurosis-producing: it becomes important when the child is being prepared for the same kind of struggle up the status-ladder that his father is engaged in. Even before he is aware of it, his mother begins to rate his achievements in talking, walking, etc. against those of the neighbor's children. His father uses a modified form of the love-withdrawal threat—the attack on self-esteem—to force the child into at least the attempt to compete. "But effective competition demands a certain degree of independence, firmness of purpose, perhaps aggressiveness. . . . The child is not able to establish an integrated self-image. Propitiation has meant obedience and 'love' for the parents, leading to a compulsive repression of self-will. But he soon discovers that propitiation, in the sense of meeting new parental expectations, means exhibiting independence, self-assertiveness, aggressiveness, *outside the home*." (Just so—but the other way around!—for the middle-class girl. Mirra Komarovsky reports in her study of college girls that signs of superior scholarship and "masculine" aggressiveness are approved by parents—up to a point. Then they advise slowing down, restraining the drive for achievement, or otherwise prospective husbands will be scared away.)

The core of the problem is not so much the need to play the contradictory roles of submissiveness and aggression, or to shift from one to the other. It is that the child-rearing conditioning for the role of loving submission never succeeds in developing the kind of personality able to play the aggressive role without anxiety and guilt-feelings. Nor, on the other hand, can the middle-class child remain submissive, in the face of parental and social pressures to be aggressive, without anxiety and guilt-feelings. "This is a key to much of his contradictory and self-blocking behavior: his desire to be the last man in the last regiment and his desire to conquer the world; his demand that everyone love him, and his settled conviction that no one could love a person as base as he; his inability to erect a hierarchy of values; his endless debate over the value of his

own goals. . . . He is embraced by a psychological Iron Maiden: any lunge forward or backward only impales him more securely on the spikes."

TO BE fair to Mr. Green, we should again point out that he does not offer this as the experience of "modern man" in general, but as an admittedly extreme—though typical—case in a certain segment of the population, the white-collar middle class. Neither is it a treatment of alienation or psychological malaise in general; rather, it claims only to indicate the background of certain neurotic trends. Other such personality portraits taken from other strata of the population, and the extension of these to include later behavior and experience in adult life (to complete the circle that began with the father as a white-collar worker), as well as empirical research, are necessary before we can say how significant or universal the history he describes is.

Nevertheless, one must note that the major social and economic trends of our day increase the number of people who are middle-class (at least in consciousness), native-born, urban—and therefore increasingly subject to the kind of conditioning Arnold Green describes, granting his analysis is correct. Such trends include urbanization and the impact of urban values and urban forms of living on the rural hinterland, the increase in the number of white-collar and service jobs, and the decline in the number of tool-using jobs, the acculturation of immigrant groups and the shutting-off of the immigration that automatically replenished the working class (which means, in this country, that the latter become increasingly middle-class in culture), the increasing difficulties in raising status in an economy that has stopped expanding (war, though, opens up a tremendous new avenue for status and success), and the heightened awareness that the economy is in decline.

It is this big-city, middle-class experience, not that of the Jewish immigrant family, unfortunately, that seems to me to be the model for our time. The East-European Jewish immigrant family was, at least for one generation, largely a working-class family. The rapid rise of the Jew in the class order may have been due less to a middle-class psychology, as some writers have assumed, or to a cultural tradition, than to the fact that they were concentrated in an industry that was relatively quickly and strongly organized, and, as semi-skilled workers,

entered into American society somewhat higher up on the scale than the other Southern and Eastern European ethnic groups. As common as the middle-class attitude of "my son shouldn't work in the shop" was the somewhat different feeling that parents should not slave to send their children to college and medical school.

In the Jewish immigrant family, the social position and expectations and the values held by both mother and father gave little basis for the devastating kind of social conditioning Green describes. Green says—and I think this applies to the Jewish immigrant family, too—"Respect, not love, is the tie that binds the peasant family." The other side of respect was good-humored awareness of limitations, it might even have been contempt; but the other side of love—when the object of love is parent and sole model for one's self—may be the sort of crippling neurosis that is one face of alienation.

SOME rather interesting factual support of Arnold Green's analysis of middle-class child-rearing has recently appeared. Evelyn Mills Duvall, in "Conceptions of Parenthood" (*American Journal of Sociology*, November, 1946), reports on an experiment in which she asked 433 mothers to list ten attributes of a "good" child and of a "good" mother. The most typical response of the middle-class mothers is: a good child is one who *loves* and *confides* in his parents. The most typical response of the lower-class mothers is: a good child is one who keeps clean and neat, and who *obeys* and *respects* his parents. And the middle-class idea of a good mother is one who, for example, sees to the emotional well-being of her child, helps him develop security, provides for his mental growth, gives love and affection. Not so the ideal lower-class mother in this study: she just keeps house and takes care of the child physically.

Another study, by Allison Davis and Robert J. Havighurst ("Social Class and Color Differences in Child-Rearing," *American Sociological Review*, December 1946), tries to get at the actual child-rearing practices of 200 mothers. They report: "Middle-class families are more rigorous than lower-class families in their training of children for feeding and cleanliness [toilet] habits. They generally begin training earlier. Furthermore, middle-class families place more emphasis on the early assumption of responsibility for the self and on individual achievement. Finally, middle-class families are

less permissive in their regimen. They require their children to take naps at a later age, to be in the house at night earlier. . . ." The middle-class child is subjected to "influences that make a child an orderly, conscientious, responsible, and tame person." But also a frustrated person: three times as many white middle-class children and twice as many Negro middle-class children suck their thumbs as compared with their lower-class counterparts. (But this, perhaps, is directly related to the fact that fewer middle-class children are breast fed.) There is exactly the same statistical disproportion between middle class and lower class in the numbers who masturbate—but the authors are not too sure the lower-class mothers understood this question.

THE problem of "what can be done" has been approached by sociologists on a number of levels; a few words on what they propose will enable us to tie up our discussion.

Since most sociologists have seen the psychological problem as a product of the transition from the simple traditionalist society,* the obvious, though naive "solution" is to propose the restoration of the formative institutions of the earlier society. Margaret Park Redfield ("The American Family: Consensus and Freedom," *American Journal of Sociology*, November 1946), for example, suggests restoring the traditional functions of the family by such measures as rebuilding cities to create smaller and more intimate communities, establishment of community festivals and ceremonials, "the relaxation of the pressure from commercial interests to throw away the old and buy the new," learning to enjoy family life, saving family pictures and records, etc. The full implications

* The well-nigh universal assumption, both in popular folklore and in the learned world, that simple societies necessarily produce integrated personalities, may of course be questioned. There is some warrant for believing that the happy savage and the "whole" medieval man are alike myths. Melvin Seeman, in "An Evaluation of Current Approaches to Personality Differences in Folk and Urban Societies" (*Social Forces*, December 1946), collates some evidence (Army-rejection rates, scores on a test of personality adjustment, admissions to mental hospitals) and concludes that the rural population in America may be worse off psychologically than the urban, and that the question at least deserves further investigation. Of course, it should be pointed out that rural America is no longer the simple society most sociologists have in mind.

of such a program might also involve moving back to the caves and worshiping natural objects, which no one—not even Dr. Redfield, I think—is willing to advocate. Worse than naive is the proposal of Professor Carle C. Zimmerman of Harvard that we save the family by a billboard campaign. This only leads one to wonder why Harvard, in particular, should harbor *three* headline-making calamity-howlers (the other two are Pitirim Sorokin and Earnest Hooton).

On a much more sophisticated level are the approaches implied, and to some extent made explicit, by Messrs. Bell and Green. Mr. Bell approaches the problem of alienation in terms of an objective social situation. Primary groups have been so pulverized and life so atomized or compartmented by modern industrial society that it has now become impossible to relate one part of life to another; in some way, experience must be made whole, direct, meaningful again. Work, leisure, family life must in some way be joined together. Mr. Green approaches the same problem of psychological disorientation in terms of the kind of people the larger social trends tend to produce. Both the environing social situation and the inner emotional experience of middle-class child-rearing lead to the feeling of inadequacy. However, the social structure, to both writers, is so involved, so uncontrollable, that it alone would seem to make the experience of alienation inevitable for anyone in modern society, whether or not his personality incorporated the neurotic trends of the middle class.

Mr. Bell's article looks forward to a change in social structure. Man, he says, has already cracked under the strain of alienation: to accept as an aim adjustment to an inhuman society seems inconceivable to him (this is also his position in his article "Adjusting Men to Machines," in the January 1947 COMMENTARY). Man still has resources of spontaneity, still yearns for brotherhood: we can meet his problem only by the release of these potentialities through a radical reform in the social structure, he indicates.

Mr. Green, on the other hand, seems to deny that these resources exist any more in the middle class, and to feel that they are rapidly being depleted elsewhere. And in his article criticizing Dr. Fromm ("Sociological Analysis of Horney and Fromm") he denies the possibility of releasing spontaneity in the modern world, since its control is a prerequisite

of the simplest kind of economic and psychological security. (The spontaneous person is either mad or a bohemian.) Dr. Fromm, well aware of this, had coupled his suggested therapy of spontaneity and freedom with the demand for social reform: a planned economy combined with democratic control from below. Mr. Green answers that a planned economy cannot be combined with democratic control from below, and would mean an even more severe restriction on spontaneity and freedom than exists today. Finally, Mr. Green, in his article on "Social Values and Psychotherapy," advises just that differentiated adjustment of man to industrial society which so horrifies Mr. Bell—and, I think, all those who are still imbued with democratic and humanistic values. "Any wholistic sense of responsibility, as well as wholistic emotional involvement with others, is out of gear with modern social structure. . . . There was some sense in expecting neighbors in a rural-familistic village to accept responsibility in curbing the personal aggression of family against family; it makes little sense to

foster a sense of personal responsibility for the use of the atomic bomb." If adjustment is proposed, it is not as a "solution"; it is but temporary therapy to ease psychological burdens: "Tragically enough, much of modern neurosis is wedged in a frame of person versus society which no immediately available social reform or therapeutic policy can reach."

The crucial issue, for the problem of alienation as for so many others, revolves around the question of what kind of society is possible. Perhaps the most important job social science can tackle today is the theoretical construction of models of possible social organization. Can we create a society which holds on to human gains in technology and rationalism and at the same time enables the expression of such values as freedom and individualism? Such a model is not, in itself, any solution. But, for the lack of it, progressive politics today is largely negative, fighting off the worst to defend the bad. A successful model of a "good" society might give us one of the preconditions for positive politics today.

LETTERS FROM READERS

On "Gentleman's Agreement"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Your reviewer Diana Trilling dismisses Laura Hobson's novel, *Gentleman's Agreement*, with very faint praise and much sharp condemnation, in about a one to ten proportion. Of course, if one applies the standards of high art the book is obviously not a great novel, and I daresay Mrs. Hobson and her publishers would be the first to admit it. But doesn't it deserve commendation as a sincere, readable effort to stimulate the thoughtful reader's mind and conscience concerning his own share in keeping alive anti-Semitic prejudice, one of the great menaces to our way of life?

If it helps in this good cause with the tens of thousands of people it seems likely to reach, doesn't it deserve some praise and the author some credit?

SYLVIA LAPIDES

Kansas City, Missouri

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Am I alone in finding Diana Trilling's review of Laura Hobson's *Gentleman's Agreement* a puzzle?

Interesting—as are all of Mrs. Trilling's able analyses of current literature—this review seems to have an animus not clearly expressed.

1. Apparently Miss Hobson shares with her publishers some guilt in not wanting to portray "swinish Jews." Are we to understand that, for novelists at least, there is a moral obligation to be unpleasant? If Mrs. Trilling espouses the right of some Jews to be unattractive, can't Miss Hobson let others be pleasant?

2. Mrs. Trilling indicates that "liberalism" (only defamed, not defined) is sterile, deadening, devoid of "grandeur or quality." *Gentleman's Agreement*, I gather before reading the book, approves of marriage, sex, reasonable child-rearing, and the acceptance of death as inevitable. In the first three of this odd list I find nothing to object to; there's good fun in each. About the last (accepting death), one thinks of Margaret Fuller's accepting the universe: "Gad, she'd better!"

Mrs. Trilling implies that she is bored by "liberalism" and welcomes "cultural pluralism" for the complications in society and the indi-

vidual that it brings about. "It creates social problems perhaps faster than it creates social values." Just as one individual talking to another, I'd advise any reader of the review not to worry about running out of complications and problems. I've never met an uncomplicated person yet. And not even a pleasant, liberal Jew or Gentile is free from his grandeur or quality.

Finally, when one comes upon the flat statement: "Surely no totalitarian ideal has ever projected a more complete regimentation of the psychic life of a nation than our present day liberal ideal"—it is time to go back and reread the piece that winds up in so odd a spot! I hope that "cultural pluralism" is not like culture as defined by Somerset Maugham—something that permits one to talk nonsense with distinction.

SAMUEL MIDDLEBROOK

New York City

"Liberalism" vs. Liberalism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The basic disagreement between your correspondents and myself about my review of *Gentleman's Agreement* is, I think, a significant one, involving more than a difference of opinion about this particular book. Mr. Middlebrook accuses me of an animus against Mrs. Hobson's novel, of being bored by liberalism, and in general of talking nonsense. Miss Lapides accuses me of grudging praise to a work of obviously good social and political intention. It seems to me clear, however, that what really disturbs both writers is the fact that my review submitted a "liberal" document—and, specifically, a document in defense of the Jews—to the kind of examination which they feel would be better reserved for the other, the reactionary or anti-Semitic, side. This point of view, which regards "liberalism" and all good causes as a kind of sacrosanctity, not to be criticized or questioned, is so prevalent nowadays among people of good will that I could scarcely have been unprepared for exciting it against me when I wrote about Mrs. Hobson's book as I did.

You will note that I will be careful in this letter to distinguish between the word "liberal" in quotation marks and the word liberal without quotation marks. The precaution is a nuisance but a semantic necessity. Quotation marks are

my dull device for indicating that I use the term, not in its honorific historical sense, but in a strictly contemporary sense—with the possibility of an uncomplimentary connotation. There was a time when liberalism referred quite simply to an attitude toward life which was characterized by the free play of the intellect and by the refusal to be guided in one's social and political opinions by prejudice, preconception, or any form of special interest. This is no longer so. Quite the contrary of denoting the free spirit of inquiry, it now describes a definite set of mind, an attitude toward life which operates upon a whole series of preconceptions and imperatives. When I said in my review, "Surely no totalitarian ideal has ever projected a more complete regimentation of the psychic life of a nation than our present-day liberal ideal," and, in the space at my disposal, listed some few of the tests of this regimentation—attitudes toward sex, marriage, child-rearing etc.—that could be applied to Mrs. Hobson's book, I was defining and anatomizing what I consider to be a very important section of contemporary opinion. I should, however, for the sake of clarity, have put the quotation marks around the word "liberal."

That this set of mind and these formulations of thought have been determined by highly moral considerations must naturally command our sympathy. Nevertheless, if only because objective situations are constantly changing and we need to be elastic to meet these changes, I think it is as urgently necessary to combat "liberal" dogmatism as it is to combat other, less sympathetic, substitutions for thought. In the degree that "liberalism," whatever its good intentions, finds more virtue in conformity to its own preconceptions than it does in the free play of the mind, it must be understood as a potentially dangerous movement in the direction of authoritarianism.

I recognize that this is strong language to use of an attitude that has grown up in our society precisely to oppose the rising tide of authoritarianism. It will be objected, I know, that here we are in the midst of a life-and-death struggle between reaction and progress, between fascism and democracy, and that I, instead of turning my fire against the powers of darkness—against imperialism, against anti-labor sentiments, against anti-Semitism and anti-Negroism (how easy it is to name them!)—stop to criticize my comrades on the side of light. But need one do more than point to Russia in instance both of the way in which one's comrades on the side of light can gradually become quite something else, and of the close connection between freedom of thought and political freedom? The

right to question those who are *not* on our side is only a relative privilege compared to the right to question those who *are* on our side. It is the absence of the latter that truly determines a totalitarian regime. When "liberalism" begins to deny us this freedom or even asks us to show the passport of our good will before we cross the frontiers of its authority, surely it is asserting its own little totalitarianism. It is learning to behave as we are told long-time prisoners of the Nazis often behaved: they began to ape their jailers.

But your correspondents are specifically concerned with my questioning of a "liberal" document about the Jews. As Miss Lapides asks of Mrs. Hobson's effort to fight anti-Semitism: "If it helps in this good cause with the tens of thousands of people it seems likely to reach doesn't it deserve some praise, and the author some credit?" My answer is yes, it deserves some credit—and I thought I gave this credit when I spoke of the book's "highly commendable purpose." But beyond this I think it deserves, not credit, but the compliment of being taken with the greatest seriousness—of being analyzed for its full social, political, and cultural consequences.

Especially it must be taken with such full seriousness in a magazine like *COMMENTARY*, whose audience can be expected to have advanced beyond the primer stage of political education. I daresay my approach to Mrs. Hobson's novel would have been different had I been reviewing it for, say, a small-town reactionary newspaper. I agree with Miss Lapides that there are probably many people who will derive some benefit from *Gentleman's Agreement* and, indeed, I said as much in my review. These people are not, however, the large majority of readers of *COMMENTARY*.

Quite the contrary of believing that the readers of *COMMENTARY* can be benefited by Mrs. Hobson's novel, I believe that they might well be harmed by it. For instead of encouraging them to think freshly and complexly about the complex Jewish problem, it encourages them in dangerous oversimplifications. For instance, by portraying only a single kind of Jew, the acculturated Jew, it encourages us in the snobbery (which is itself a latent form of anti-Semitism) of supposing that the cause of the Jews is the cause only of ourselves and our acculturated friends. Or again, by proposing that there are no differences between Jews and Gentiles except the differences caused by religious discrimination, it suggests that all differences between people are undesirable—which in turn suggests that differences in art-forms, in dress, in diets, in all cultural manifestations, are un-

desirable. Reflecting upon the cultural uniformity that Mrs. Hobson seems to ask for, one's mind naturally turns to that specialist in the standard American product, Hollywood, and one wonders how *Gentleman's Agreement* would be cast for the movies. Mrs. Hobson's logic would obviously demand that Van Johnson play Dave Goldman and that Lionel Barrymore play Professor Lieberman. But would that represent a real social advance over Hollywood's one exception to racial type-casting—its care *not* to cast Jews so that they will be recognizable as Jews?

Further, to read *Gentleman's Agreement* with less than full seriousness, to give it—in a magazine like this one—less than full credence (and credence, I think, is rather more important than credit) would be to make some very false assumptions. It would be to assume that the Jewish problem is an isolated problem in our society—in other words, that general cultural criteria do not affect Jews as they do Gentiles. It would be to assume that there is really no significant connection between art and politics—in other words, that the quality of our thinking can be separated from the quality of our social actions. Finally and most important, it would be to assume that any one call to battle against anti-Semitism is just as good as any other—in other words, that the cause of the Jews is so hopeless that it doesn't matter how it is fought.

Since I refuse to make any of these assumptions, I must refuse Mrs. Hobson's book an easy "liberalistic" acceptance, and instead must examine it as freely as I can—not as a token of its author's conscience, but as a whole view of life. And this view of life I find, as I said in my review, a grievously limited and sterile one. I am convinced that Mrs. Hobson's good intentions will not take me where I want to go. And the faults of *Gentleman's Agreement* as a social-political document I find identical with its faults as a work of art. It has no freshness of perception and no directness of observation; it permits no distinctions between human beings and no distinction to human being; it is tolerant of only one way of looking at Jews and it is therefore guilty of its own form of intolerance. All of this adds up to an unsatisfactory work of the imagination and, by extension, to the projection of an unsatisfactory world. Some of the faults are explicit; more of them are implicit in the book's tone and characterizations.

I know that not only Mrs. Hobson, but also your magazine and all its readers, are profoundly opposed to the creation of a Jewish social and political ghetto. But I am afraid

that admirers of *Gentleman's Agreement* fail to realize that its kind of thinking, like the thinking or lack of thinking of *PM* to which I related it, is helping to create something just as bad—an intellectual ghetto for both Jews and Gentiles. By encouraging its readers to hug their grievances and cherish their emotions of social virtue, to close the windows of their minds against any fresh currents of idea lest they chill the hot issue, *PM* is becoming the perfect organ of a new ghetto of opinion. Certainly it is the organ par excellence of contemporary "liberalism." It could never have been the organ of classic liberalism. For liberalism, as it once existed, prided itself on being more intelligent, more boldly imaginative, than its enemies. It would have scorned to use the pressure from the opposition as an excuse for not examining its own premises. It hated non-thought as it hated all other infringements of liberty.

I do not believe that the condition of American democracy or of American Jews demands, I do not believe the condition of world democracy or world Jewry is served by, this present-day retreat from thinking into "liberalistic" dogma. As a matter of fact, I think just the opposite, that the salvation of the Jews and of mankind rests in the freest possible interplay of highly distinguishable individuals, groups, and opinions, and in the free spirit of inquiry—that it rests, in short, with an older form of liberalism, the kind that required no quotation marks.

DIANA TRILLING

New York City

A Contribution to Judaism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I wish to express my appreciation to you for printing the article by Professor Paul Weiss ["The True, the Good, and the Jew"] in the October COMMENTARY. . . . In publishing precisely such themes as that of Professor Weiss, it appears to me, lies the future of COMMENTARY as an independent journal dedicated to the advancement of thought and culture generally, but always conscious of itself as a Jewish contribution to that progress. While I disagreed with many of the assumptions and conclusions of the author, yet the stimulation of the article far surpassed any sense of opposition. . . .

RABBI LOUIS LEIFER

Taunton, Massachusetts

Adolph S. Ochs

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I did not know the late Adolph Ochs inti-

mately, but I knew him well enough to be able to characterize Louis Berg's appraisal of him as unjust and wholly distorted.

I met Mr. Ochs for the first time in March or April 1917, when I directed the effort to raise \$10,000,000 for Foreign Jewish Relief. The task was a tremendous one. The invariable comment was: "It can't be done." There were only a few persons who felt the objective attainable, among them Morris D. Waldman and the late Cyrus I. Sulzberger, both of whom persuaded me to assume that great undertaking.

I called on Mr. Ochs seeking the support of the powerful *New York Times*. Said he: "I should like to contribute 10 percent of the amount which will be raised in my native state, Tennessee," and then proceeded in his calm and reserved manner to give assurance that the cause could count on the wholehearted co-operation of his paper. I can truthfully say that it would have been extraordinarily difficult to organize the campaigns in 1,516 communities, particularly in the city of New York, and to raise more than \$30,000,000 during 1917 and 1918 if it had not been for the *Times*.

Over a period of years I had occasion to appeal to Mr. Ochs in behalf of a variety of causes and individuals. He was always sympathetic, and he did many of his works of kindness anonymously. I cite one instance merely because it was typical of the man.

In 1915 Henrietta Szold resigned from her secretarial post with the Jewish Publication Society. In recognition of her past services, but, more than that, in the hope of liberating her for greater services in the future, several persons through the mediation of the golden-hearted Julian W. Mack provided Miss Szold with a stipend that made her financially independent. Thereafter, according to her biographer, Marvin Lowenthal, that remarkable woman could work at what she pleased and for whom she pleased. Adolph Ochs was one of three or four who made this possible, but with the characteristic provision that his contribution should be treated in confidence.

Many such instances could be cited, indicating the deep sympathy and human warmth of Mr. Ochs.

Again and again I used to hear Louis Marshall say, whenever Adolph Ochs was criticized for not taking a more active interest in Jewish communal affairs, that the publisher of the *Times* was rendering inestimable service to American and world Jewry because he created a newspaper which by common consent was the greatest in this country.

Mr. Berg says: "Mr. Ochs built a veritable Temple, a journalistic cathedral dedicated—alas!—to a Roman deity, Status Quo."

Certainly Mr. Ochs was not for the status quo when he supported Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Alfred Smith, Herbert Lehman, and Senator Robert F. Wagner—all of whom have been responsible for so much of our progressive legislation. True, on occasions the *Times* did not adhere to the "party line," as when it criticized, not unjustifiably, some of the features of the Wagner Labor Relations Act and other New Deal measures. But it should be borne in mind that Justice Brandeis, Justice Cardozo, and Governor Lehman also assailed the attempt to "pack the Supreme Court."

In his splendid letter to COMMENTARY, Judge Proskauer pointed out, and I know this to be a fact, that Arthur Hays Sulzberger was not identified with a delegation which called on President Roosevelt urging him not to appoint Felix Frankfurter to the Supreme Court bench "lest a Jew make himself conspicuous and provoke the malice of the anti-Semites." This story was repeated by many persons who claimed to speak with authority of the White House. When the appointment was made, the *Times* had a powerful editorial about Justice Frankfurter.

In his comment on Proskauer's letter, Berg says he is deeply distressed that anyone should have read into his words a connection between Mr. Sulzberger and the Frankfurter episode, but anyone reading the article so full of innuendoes and insinuations could not fail to draw the inference that there was such connection.

I resent the frequent references to the "Yahudim." Many years ago I pointed out to B. Charney Vladeck that it was time for the Yiddish press to abandon this opprobrious epithet. How can we possibly expect the non-Jews to cease calling us names when we indulge in the use of such expressions? Vladeck, too, deplored this tendency.

There are many other items in the Berg article to which one might justifiably take exception.

JACOB BILLIKOPF

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I could write pages of comment deriding Louis Berg's appraisal of Adolph Ochs and his epic achievement. But while resisting that temptation I do feel impelled to call your attention to the writer's reference to the gift to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, in order to correct the implication in his phrase "propitiatory offering." Those words strike me as deliberate malice. I recall the incident and the flare-up, at the time, on the part of some Jewish bigots. I happen to know that the publisher of the

Times, like other prominent New Yorkers, was solicited for a contribution to the building and furnishings of that great ecclesiastical structure, an edifice of which all New Yorkers might well be proud. Not being a bigot any more than, say, the Rockefellers—who have repeatedly made gifts to Jewish causes—he responded promptly and generously. Being loyal to Judaism, he conceived the idea of presenting a pair of Menorahs (rare examples of medieval Jewish art) as perpetual reminder to the Christian worshippers of the historic connection between Judaism and Christianity—a connection, by the way, which the American Jewish Committee has repeatedly, consistently, and very properly stressed in diverse ways.

MORRIS D. WALDMAN
New York City

Mr. Berg's article, "The Americanism of Adolph S. Ochs," represented, in our opinion, a serious effort to appraise Mr. Ochs' philosophy of Jewish adjustment to American life as presented in a sympathetic biography, *An Honorable Titan*, by Gerald Johnson. Mr. Berg differed with this philosophy and its implications for our day as he saw them. Readers interested in learning Mr. Berg's views fully are referred to his article in the January issue of this magazine, and to his reply to criticisms of his views by Joseph M. Proskauer and Rabbi Nathan A. Perilman in the "Letters from Readers" department in the February issue—EDITOR.

Synagogue Architecture

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to write a word of appreciation of Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein's most informative article on "The Problem of Synagogue Architecture."

As one who has had a limited experience in this field, I can say that there is a tremendous educational task involved in conveying to the rabbis, building committees, and others concerned even the elementary rudiments of the inherent problems, and the proper approach to the evaluation of the design of synagogues in America. To this task the journals and the pertinent organizations should seriously address themselves, in view of the impending program of synagogue building.

May I however mention that the article, probably for lack of space, might have given a little attention to the evolutionary changes that have occurred in functional requirements—such as the increasing importance of the sermon, the

fluctuating attendance, the stress on the social and educational activities—and their relation to the architectural problems involved. The solutions proposed in some of the recent preliminary plans referred to in the article appear to have indications of striving for striking effects, rather than adherence to the accepted principle that form follows function. . . .

SIGMUND BRAVERMAN
Cleveland, Ohio

On "Commentary"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I want to compliment you again upon the variety and completeness of your numbers. . . . You were wise to give your magazine the title, "Commentary." If you had not such a broad title, you could hardly print such provocative and stimulating reading as appeared in the March issue. . . .

JULIUS HENRY COHEN
New York City

From John Roy Carlson

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The man who reviewed *The Plotters* is intellectually dishonest. He is dishonest because after seeking to convey the completely false impression that I am, or have been, pro-Communist, he neglects to mention that I thoroughly denounced American Communists and the Communist philosophy in a lengthy chapter entitled "The American Communist Party."

This chapter has aroused the furious action of the comrades against me. I have at no time been pro-Communist, despite the crackpot views of your reviewer—views which are shared by the *Chicago Tribune*, the hate-mongers, and others who turn for misinformation to the columns of the nationalist vermin press. Equally deplorable is the judgment and intellectual honesty of an editor who opens the columns of his magazine to the fulminations of the vermin press.

JOHN ROY CARLSON
New York City

Mr. Carlson's letter arrived when this issue was on the press. We have asked Mr. Petersen, who reviewed Mr. Carlson's book, to write a reply for our next issue.

Because of limitations of space, we must again defer to a later issue a number of letters discussing Will Herberg's article, "From Marxism to Judaism."—Ed.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

History for Art's Sake

KING JESUS. BY ROBERT GRAVES. New York, Creative Age Press, 1946. 424 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by MORDECAI S. CHERTOFF

ROBERT GRAVES himself notes that "many of the historical assumptions made by characters in this story are not necessarily valid," and, accommodatingly enough, lists some of these assumptions. But his list is far too modest. As a matter of fact, Mr. Graves has violated all the canons of historical fiction in this latest book of his. What is described on the dust cover as "a novel" ranges—or rather charges madly—over the length and breadth of Jewish history up to, and including, the crucifixion of Jesus, committing many times over such historical errors as Thomas Mann made in his Joseph series, but achieving nothing of Mann's success. For while Mann overreached himself with respect to the facts, converting Joseph into a moon-worshipper, and compounding an exotic early Judaism out of a blend of Egyptian and Canaanite idolatry, he told a story that draws the reader relentlessly and profitably through four volumes. Graves is simply boring.

It is a relief, however, to notice that Graves is not "Jew-conscious"; he approaches the Jews as if they were a normal people—different in personality but not in kind from Gauls, Englishmen, or Arabs.

Significantly enough, he shows greater sympathy for the Petrine, as opposed to the Pauline, conception of Jesus' intentions. As a matter of fact, his general approach is closer to the Jewish position on Jesus than is that of the Jewish writer, Sholem Asch. Thus he rationalizes all of Jesus' miracles and pictures him as the son of a man—quibble as we may with the choice of Antipater, son of Herod, as father. (Antipater is a direct descendant of Caleb, the "good" spy of Joshua's day, according to our author.) However, this invention serves the purpose of making it possible for Graves to fly in the face of Scripture and portray Jesus

as one of the leading scholars of the age, equally at home in Hebrew (at that time no longer a spoken language), in Greek (which the pious shunned), and in the prevailing Aramaic—and adept in magic as well.

His scholarship serves to make Jesus conscious of the mission Graves has assigned him: "to destroy the power of the Female," Jehovah's predecessor, rival, and divorced consort, the Great Mother or Triple Moon Goddess, otherwise known in the eastern Mediterranean lands as Hecate or Astarte. (This explains Graves' description of the Samaritans, whom Jewish tradition considers idolators, as worshipers of "Jehovah's divorced partner, Ashima the Dove-Goddess.") Essentially a Pharisee, and brought up in the Pharisaic tradition despite Graves' teaching, the historical Jesus could never have understood such a mission, let alone dedicate himself to it. Our author may have been "inspired" by the Jewish concept of God the Father; assuming that there can be no affirmation without an accompanying negation, fatherhood must needs negate the ever-present female principle. However, it is only the Christian notion of Original Sin that could see the female as evil.

Graves also rewrites Jewish history to provide an involved dissertation on the matrilineal descent of Jewish royal prerogatives. Since this invention would invalidate Jesus' claim to the throne of Israel as a direct descendant of Herod, Graves secures the claim in another way: he has Jesus marry (without consummating the marriage) Michal, who is the youngest daughter of a youngest daughter of the royal house of David. The author points up his climax by describing Pontius Pilate, one of the worst of the Roman procurators of Judea, and a harsh, cruel, and vindictive ruler, as a tolerant and wonderfully mild-mannered gentleman, susceptible to Jewish sensitivities and prejudices—and Jesus' main champion against the Sadducee faction that demanded his death. Pilate, of course, was aware of the secret of Jesus' birth. This "awareness" changes the inscription on the cross—"King of the

Jews"—from a fitting and typical example of Pilate's scorn of the Jews into a lame statement of "fact." The scene falls flat, and the invention remains poor history and poorer fiction.

In the appended historical commentary, an apologia unusual for a writer as bland as Graves, we read that "a detailed commentary written to justify the unorthodox views contained in this book would be two or three times as long as the book itself. . . ." By the same token, a refutation of all the fantasies perpetrated at the expense of Judaism and in violation of its spirit, and a critique of the view of Jesus that Graves presents here, would take more space than this novel merits. At the same time, a number of Graves' inventions deserve comment, or at least recording.

Simon Boethus, high priest appointed by Herod the Great, could not very well have been a ranking Essene and master of all the mystic lore of that sect (and teacher to Jesus), since Essenes were not permitted to hold temporal office. What is more, Herod's appointments were all made from among the aristocrats, and were in the main Sadducees. Graves talks of two Sanhedrins: one for political, and one for ritual matters. All that we do know is that the Sanhedrin, predominantly Pharisee in composition, was in those days limited to ritual law; while Herod himself—and not the "Sadducee Great Sanhedrin" Graves invents for the job—managed all Jewish political affairs.

In what dream-book Graves found his profound analysis of Pesach (Passover—God passed over the houses of the Jews in Egypt during the Tenth Plague) as a "hobbling dance in invocation of the . . . god" Rimmon of the Canaanite pomegranate cult, "which was swallowed up by the cult of Jehovah about the time of King Saul," will remain forever mysterious, as will the idea that up to the same time, king-sacrifice and cannibalism were practised: first annually, and then, extending the king's tenure, at greater intervals, with one of his luckless subjects serving as substitute. This persisted, says Graves, until good King Josiah's time, when it seems that the sages noticed Abraham's substitution of a ram for his son Isaac: and so cannibalism died in Israel.

There are many other touches that beg to be remembered: since it was customary to tear garments as a sign of mourning upon hearing blasphemy, Graves invents what he

calls "blasphemy seams." And since Graves pictures Antipater, son of Herod, as a noble, pious, kindly man, devoted to his mad father (rather than as the foiled parricide he actually was), there can be only one explanation of that father's demand for his son's death: according to Graves, Herod was modeling himself on Abraham and was "sacrificing" his son to Herod's god, Seth (of the onager-cult of Seth-Typhon), as a propitiatory offering and a bid to be cured of his mortal illness. Unhappily for the parallel, Scripture says nothing of Abraham's being ill. And Jewish tradition, which has little enough love for Herod, never accused him of attempting to revive any ancient idol-worship cult.

It is more pleasant to be able to record that Graves' view of the respective roles of the Pharisees and Sadducees in the trial and execution of Jesus is a sound one, and it is unfortunate that his strongly worded disclaimer of Jesus' having preached against the Pharisees as a class, rather than against individual perverters of Pharisaic doctrine, is almost lost in the maze of historical absurdities. What is not lost is the classic Christian logic that has the Jews rejecting (synonymous with killing) Jesus, and thus earning the curse and subsequent persecution with which they have been honored through the ages.

Graves uses historical events not as a skeleton for his story, but as detective-story clues to reality. And he uses not only established historical fact in this manner, but superstition and folklore as well, and gives equal authority to history and fable and the Talmud and the Church Fathers and Irish poetry and the *Toldot Yeshu* (a collection of fables recognized as "history" only by Graves). When an anonymous—and apparently non-Jewish—reviewer in *Time* writes that Graves' great learning "may enlighten the unscholarly reader, particularly on Jewish religious tradition," the Jewish reviewer must protest and warn the reader of Graves' total irresponsibility in his handling of Jewish religious tradition.

It is obvious, however, that Graves' intention in writing this "novel" was not to compose a historical pot-boiler. Influenced perhaps by depth psychology, he feels, apparently, that the issue between the "rule" of the father and that of the mother animated Jewish religion and political history in a preponderant way, and that the supremacy of the father was there established once and for all. There are certain

risks, however, when such a serious thesis is dealt with by a novelist, even if he does not mean to be taken very earnestly. There is the danger that untutored people, like the *Time* reviewer, will take this invented lore for the real thing and read his fantasy for the sake of edification and erudition.

The Jewish Historical Sense

YIVO ANNUAL OF JEWISH SOCIAL SCIENCE. Volume I. New York, Yiddish Scientific Institute—Yivo, 1946. 319 pp.

Reviewed by OSCAR HANDLIN

THE activities of the Yiddish Scientific Institute have long been of interest to students of the social sciences concerned with problems that touch upon the Jews, the more so since its headquarters moved to New York in 1939. Yet the barriers of language have kept its publications from receiving either the full measure of appreciation due them, or the mature and comprehensive criticism essential to the maintenance of contacts with other lines of scholarly development. The projected series of annual volumes in which representative selections of the work of the organization will appear in English translation will certainly be gratifying to those hitherto deprived of access by ignorance of Yiddish and, no doubt, profitable to the members of Yivo themselves.

The first of these annual volumes contains several papers excellent in their own rights, Elias Tcherikower's analysis of Jewish historiography, for instance, and A. J. Heschel's eloquent account of the "Eastern European Era in Jewish History." And Abraham A. Golumb's study of Jewish self-hatred appears appropriately at a moment when it can find in Koestler's recent novel a long confirmatory footnote.

But an anthology of this sort is more valuable for the opportunity to assess the achievements of the group as a whole than for the occasion to deal with individual contributions. Milton R. Konvitz's description in January's COMMENTARY of the origin and development of the Institute points to its historic function, the transfer into secular social science of traditional Jewish cultural values. The varied articles before us display, in their strength and weaknesses, signs of the provisional character of that process.

The selection of subjects reveals at first glance two omissions and one inclusion of sig-

nificance. Linguistics, generally counted one of the humanities as an aspect of literature, here assumes the role of a social science, a treatment which mirrors the part played by Yiddish as a social element in the Jewish life of Eastern Europe.

Conversely, political science is not represented at all. The alienation of the Jew from the state in Eastern Europe probably accounts for the lack of interest in the techniques of government and of the exercise of power. The absence of economics, as it is understood in America, also reflects Yivo's background. There is a great deal of stress upon economic and social factors in history, for instance the illuminating introduction of Raphael Mahler's "Social and Political Aspects of the Haskalah in Galicia," but there is no concern with "pure economics," with the functioning of the system of production as such. This bias may spring from the concrete situation of Eastern European Jews, for whom the process of earning a livelihood was so thoroughly overridden by political and social implications or complications as to be meaningless in the abstract.

The impact of traditional sources upon the basic conceptions of social science may best be gauged in the sections which fall into the broad categories of social psychology and history. Concern with the former field is to be expected, since much of the recent thinking on that subject by Jews and non-Jews alike has centered about the definition of national or ethnic traits and the examination of the sources of group consciousness. The studies here follow the pattern of current work in the area. They are up to the level of what is being done elsewhere. But they offer no new departure, and they share the general limitations of the approach. Lehrer's study of the psychology of the Jewish child in America, and Greenberg's study of the attitudes of the Jewish students at Yale, thus rest heavily on statistical data, depersonalized and dehumanized and set forth in an uninspired manner that raises serious doubts as to the fruitfulness of this line of inquiry.

The failure of integration here is more striking by contrast to the development of the historical essays. In the Jewish tradition, historical thinking, even the sense of chronology, is of comparatively recent origin. The work of the Jewish historians, in method, is largely derivative from the 19th-century German scientific schools. Yet the application to materials specifically Jewish has evoked a transformation.

For to the Eastern European Jew, culture was "the style of life of a people." Those who dealt with this culture could not limit their narratives to a succession of rulers, or even to the development of institutional, artistic, and philosophic forms. They had to reach back to the style of life of the whole people, a conception of social history towards which, significantly, American historians have been groping in the past few decades.

The Eastern European Jew had a broad tradition, rooted in Talmudic discipline, of concern with problems that now form the substance of the social studies. That concern was unformulated in terms of modern conceptual categories, and unscientific in terms of modern methods, but rich in its concentration upon the reality of the individual in society, and upon the concreteness of phenomena in their context. The scholars of Yivo can perform a valuable service by preserving in their work a measure of continuity with that tradition.

Can Anti-Semitism Be Outlawed?

AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM. By MARK VISHNIAK. New York, Research Institute of the Jewish Labor Committee, 1946. 135 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by MILTON R. KONVITZ

THIS book by Mark Vishniak, formerly professor of public law in Moscow, and visiting professor at the Hague Academy of International Law, is chiefly concerned with the question of outlawing defamation of Jews as a group through the enactment of group libel laws, by legislatures and by international action.

Dr. Vishniak sees the issue as one between the right of Jews to live a life of dignity and honor, and the right of persons to express their opinions of groups by written or spoken word. The right to honor and the right to free expression of opinion may clash. How is the conflict to be resolved?

In his statement of the case, the author seems to be pointing toward an acceptance of the traditional American judicial test of a "clear and present danger."

"A citizen's right to express his dislike of the Jews or other minorities," says Dr. Vishniak, "and to single out for criticism their negative traits, is as inviolable in a democratic state as

is, on the other hand, the undeniable right of the state to prevent and to punish actions at the point when they deprive individuals and groups of their rights, worth and dignity." (*Italics mine.*) Just as a state may prohibit the sale or use of opium, says the author, so it may limit the freedom of making dishonoring statements. In protecting freedom of expression, he says, a state should not sacrifice group honor and dignity—"we must look for and we must find a balance. It is no restriction of the freedom of speech, for example, to forbid a false cry of 'fire' in a crowded cinema."

At this point, one becomes aware that the author is giving only lip service to the "clear and present danger" test. For what he says, in effect, is that group defamatory statements should be prohibited at the point where the statements will in fact cause a group to be dishonored. A person, in other words, should be free to make anti-Semitic statements, but only until it is felt that his audience will consider the statements anti-Semitic—for then the Jews as a group will be dishonored. This means quite flatly that anti-Semitic statements should be prohibited and punished.

Indeed, the "clear and present danger" test has no real place in Dr. Vishniak's argument. For that test means that a person is free to speak up to the point where his speech creates a clear and present danger to an interest which the state has a right to protect, such as, for example, the life and safety of persons attending a theatrical performance, who are endangered when a person cries out "fire!"

When, several years ago, a notorious anti-Semite addressed streetcorner mobs in the Bronx, he was properly prosecuted for creating a clear and present danger to the peace of the community, because his inflammatory speeches led to public disturbances and breaches of the peace. There the "clear and present danger" test had direct application. But it has no application when the law in effect provides that anti-Semitic statements shall be prohibited and punished because they create a "clear and present danger" to the honor of the group.

Dr. Vishniak would, I take it, support the Lynch Bill, which was considered in Congress in 1944.

This bill provided that the criminal code be amended to declare non-mailable all written matter and pictures containing any defamatory and false statement which tends to expose persons, designated by race or religion, to

hatred, contempt, ridicule, or obloquy, or tends to cause such persons to be shunned or avoided, or to be injured in their business or occupation. The American Jewish Congress sponsored the bill. On the other hand, the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People opposed the measure because of their apprehension that enactment of the bill would lead to a stifling of free expression of grievances (grievances, e.g., of Negroes against white persons), and would impair the constitutional right of free speech and freedom of the press (limited by the "clear and present danger" test). To my mind, if one takes one's position on the Constitution, then the ACLU and the NAACP are right, and the American Jewish Congress and Dr. Vishniak wrong.

One sees no objection to an extension to groups of the civil laws against libel and slander so that a member of a libeled group may recover damages as an injured party, provided the plea of truth shall serve as a complete defense.

Anti-Semites have as much right to say that Jews are an obnoxious people as revolutionaries have to say that capitalists are a vile lot of exploiters. But if an anti-Semite, as Victor Gollancz has recently argued, chooses to write that Jews kill Christian babies, or that they have formed, through the Elders of Zion, an international conspiracy, and I can prove the contrary by ordinary rules of evidence, then he ought to be punished; but, unlike Gollancz, I would limit the punishment to civil damages.

Dr. Vishniak's book itself provides partial proof that legislation against group defamation is not the cure. The Criminal Code of the Soviet Union provides that incitement of national or religious enmity and disunity shall constitute a crime against the state. A person convicted of the crime may be sentenced to imprisonment for a period up to two years or, under certain circumstances, he may be sentenced to death by shooting. But the author admits that "the most recent news from U.S.S.R. testifies that the scourge of anti-Semitism has not disappeared."

There is little point in urging an international convention, agreement, or law against group defamation at a time when no agreement has been reached as to what policy the domestic law should reflect. The time for Americans to agitate for international laws against community defamation will come after Dr. Vishniak or

someone else will have drafted a law which will have the support of interested groups and persons. Until now, no such legislation has been promulgated. Dr. Vishniak's book should serve to stimulate further exploration of the problem, but it does not provide the answer.

The Heritage of the East Side

NOTHING IS A WONDERFUL THING. BY HELEN WOLFERT. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1946. 118 pp. \$2.00.

Reviewed by JACOB GLATSTEIN

THERE is a Jewish proverb which says that a story should not be too closely questioned. It may have been with this in mind that Helen Wolfert's book was labeled a "story-poem." But, if this was the case, it was done in vain; the questions have not been forestalled.

It is too bad. A book on the order of this one ought to be read two or three times if it is to be digested thoroughly. But, in truth, it's hard to read it even once. An odd book, really. You begin it and see that it is teeming and gleaming with verbal novelties. You feel that, under these words, there must be treasures of equal value. Lift these stones and you will find glories that'll leave you starry-eyed. But the words tire you so. You lack the power needed to lift them, the strength that is needed to understand them. You lack the strength to even want to understand them.

A drowsy apathy takes hold of you. You fall into a trance. But it is hubbub that has hypnotized you. Clamor—not silence. For, in Helen Wolfert's book, you cannot find any silence. You cannot buy it at any price. The words are strident—so strident that they make you indifferent to the words that they are shrieking. Meaning? Let them mean anything they choose. You simply don't care.

It takes time

*To finish dying—she says and you Stan
You will be done with dying, too.*

This may prove to be very profound after a second reading, but the author, alas, does not afford you a quiet moment in which to try to get on to her thought.

A narrative poem. But there isn't much story. Only one incident—a murder. Two thieves throw Ezekiel Kahn, the neighborhood genius, over the stair-rail. Ezekiel falls a couple of

flights. Then, as he lies there—dead—the poetess sings:

*The water curls. The sand lies under
Where the water curls. The sun curls
With the curl in the water; light and light
Light and light, hill and valley,
Hill and valley, hill and valley,
Vein and root, vein and root,
Vein and root, and scatter, scatter
And duller deeper, duller deeper,
And down, down, dull and deep,
The blur, the thud, the mud, the mud,
Mud, mud, mud, mud.*

A bit too Joycean, perhaps, for an East Side poem that had its genesis in these lines:

*Hugging the brood of bugs and ticks
Born in the night's deep hatchery. . .*

Jenny, ten years old, wakes on the fire-escape. In a flash, she sees that this day is the genuine East Side day. This is it—to a T—the day that has already been described in a few hundred other books. It stinks. It's hot. Sultry. The whole block's waiting for rain. The whore—she's waiting. The thieves—they are waiting. The synagogue—the godless synagogue—is waiting. And Mrs. Tress's illegitimate grandchildren—yes, all six of them—they're waiting, too. The only one who isn't waiting is Ezekiel Kahn, the East Side's thinker. Ezekiel—he who used to brew his deep thoughts in the public library. Ezekiel is dead.

Hot. A sultry day. A suffocating night. Ten-year-old Jenny was finally able to doze off.

*The forest walks in, oak green,
Elm green, ash green,
Almond and willow green like gray,
Green of palm and pine like gold.
Out of the long distance, from the green far,*

*Downward, downward and never back,
Darker and darker—Jenny sleeps.*

How could Jenny fail to see the Sandman? After such a soothing din, how could anybody fail to nod?

HELEN WOLFERT strains to get all the smells and sounds—the shouts, the noises, conversations, and voices that she remembers. She gets them. She has everything. Yet—there's some-

thing lacking in this book. One thing—a soul.

She gets them. She has everything. The thieves, the bastards, the *nudniks*, the synagogue Jews with the pasted-on beards—all the walk-ons of a Jewish operetta. The rats, the bed bugs—all the stage-props. And the tone of a movie double-feature. She gets them—gets them all. All the paraphernalia of an East Side distilled in the laboratory of self-slander and self-hate.

This is “nothing.” Yes. How does he phrase it, the Philosopher—the *nudnik*—of the opus?

*You get your eyes and your nose and fingers
into nothing.*

*And nothing is a wonderful thing. It's better
Even than being dead.*

But, this “nothing”—this Nirvana better even than being dead—this is not the East Side. It is a nothingness that leads to nothing. If the same pen were to turn its attention to a palace—song-birds instead of bed bugs, perfumes rather than stench—it would still lead to “nothing.” For it is the pen itself that is tired and devitalized. All it gives us is a bog of words.

*Piercing the air, inflaming the nostrils,
Dropping to the mouth and falling to the belly,
Making them delirious—the smell, the smoke,
Of Living Rat, the persuasion, the musk.*

Who is it, incidentally, whose senses are so keen? Is it ten-year-old Jenny who views the rats in all their delirious convulsions? Is it the nostalgic poet who, with highly developed sensitivity, reaches back, back, to the hot, foul-smelling East Side?

It's hard to tell. See how book-wisdom and childishness are intertwined! Resonant names:

*Freud and Kant, turn them out!
Marx and Darwin, turn them out!*

commingle with

*Bit by bit, frown by frown,
The food goes in, the food goes down.
Open teeth and teeth close.
Tick, tock; tick, tock.*

Who's talking? Who is it who says the silly things? Who says the things that are so clever?

What else but only nothing can come

*To those whom fear and want have filled
So full there seems for them no other way
But to think that nothing is a wonderful thing?*

Our East Side is used to these attacks. She has had her share of back-biters. Enough scurrilities have been cast into her face. Helen Wolfert is not the first to vilify our Jewish life this way. Nor is she the first to have her brothel rubbing shoulders with her synagogue. It's no longer the least bit daring to sing of Mr. Silderbrot as he sits in the *shul* and tries to forget Gloria, his daughter, and her customers—

*Are the boards of his home worn by the feet
Of the men who come to consort with her?*

It's no longer a feat to sing of old Tress—in the *shul*—thinking about his “whored grandchildren.” Or the Preloff's—parents of thieves—

*All the holies, unblinded in the wide
White, Bible light of Jehova.*

This is easy. So easy. The shelf is full of books that belong to this category. And to make it easier, Helen Wolfert was aided by a stroke of good fortune. There is no doubt that we Jews do have a sizable quota of underworld-characters. But lucky for the author that she was able to find the entire quota on a single block. Nay, as a matter of fact, she was able to cram the whole “sanctified community” into one single tenement. The children of Israel—long may they live—they take such a pleasure in self flagellation!

Nothing is a Wonderful Thing may serve us, however—as the text for a sermon.

What are the gifts, the precious gifts, that we bear unto the world? With what are our caravans laden? Borrowed beads? Cheap costume-jewelry? With such alliteration as this?

*To forget floss, forget the feel
Of fleece, the feel of fur. To forget
The grass. To live only to forget.*

Or such inventive rhymes as “dough-nuts” and “go nuts,” “hook in” and “give a look in”? Is the world really waiting for us to re-chew and re-tailor yesterday's stale poetic novelties?

Must we spit every time we pass a synagogue? Must we people the tents of Israel with *nudniks*, pick-pockets, rats and consumptives,

one whore, three whores, six whoresons? Is this the gift—the precious gift—our young generation is bearing?

Is this really the spiritual map of the East Side? How do you reconcile it with the fact that the East Side also has a Jewish press, an organized labor movement, a fervent religious orthodoxy, a network of charitable institutions, a Jewish-American literature?

Were our children really spawned in such an atmosphere? How does that fit in with the fact that the East Side has served as a tender nurse to educators, teachers, scholars, writers, legislators, judges?

Helen Wolfert's book is superficial. “Tick-tock, tick-tock. It is eight o'clock.” But our life has moved further than nursery rhyme. It's 1947. We have been through two world wars. Six million Jews have been exterminated. We are beyond the stage of *Nothing is a Wonderful Thing*.

Is this the culmination of our heritage? Is this a link to our Jewish Past? If our parents were tired tailors and pressers, should we, the college-trained kids, haul off and smack them in the face? If our parents were remiss in anything, it was in failing to find the time to teach us some decent Jewish manners—decent Jewish traits of character.

We—we who write—what are we? What do we want? Why do we use words?

I do not mind it when our third-rate writing is a part of the stream of non-Jewish literature. But when we choose to parade our Jewishness, we have an immense responsibility.

Yes, there have been Jews who with fiery words have castigated our race. We have had our moralists. We have had our prophets. But—this “nothing” worse even than death—this is not the fire, this is not the rod of prophecy. It isn't good poetry either. It is only:

*The food goes in,
The food goes down.
Open teeth and teeth close.
Tick, tock; tick, tock.*

Our age has no time for this precise portrayal of the mastication process, for the philosophy that “nothing is a wonderful thing,” for a whore-and-thief East Side invented only to gratify the urge to self-flagellation. The world hasn't the patience to listen to this thin, shallow and hollow Jewishness. “Tick-tock. Tick-tock.”

Genius and Madness

THE MIND AND DEATH OF A GENIUS.

By DAVID ABRAHAMSEN. New York, Columbia University Press, 1946. 228 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by WILLIAM BARRETT

OTTO WEININGER, the subject of this biographical and psychoanalytic study, was born in Vienna in 1880. In 1903, at the age of 23, he published an extraordinary book, *Sex and Character*, which attained great notoriety and has been translated into most of the European languages. A few months after its publication, Weininger, driven by the torments of psychosis and guilt, committed suicide.

Dr. Abrahamsen's reason for selecting Weininger as a subject for study is that he offers a very striking case for the now very generally discussed problem of the relation between abnormality and mental brilliance. Some question, of course, may be raised immediately about the justification of Abrahamsen's title. Weininger's book permits one to say that he was extraordinarily precocious and brilliant, that he had amazing flashes of insight, but I think we should be a little more chary of using the term "genius," applying it only where there is some solid and continuous body of work. Freud himself spoke of Weininger's as a "lousy book," though elsewhere he also describes it as "remarkable." Both descriptions fit; since Freud was engaged in founding psychoanalysis upon the bedrock of patient and laborious investigation, he was undoubtedly a little nettled by a book that is for the most part speculative, *a priori*, rhapsodical; on the other hand, Freud later conceded the acuteness of a good many of Weininger's perceptions. Weininger was really gratifying a literary and poetical impulse more than an analytic one, as is shown by the other fragments collected after his death. There is good ground for Freud's irritation in this: psychoanalysis has been conquered as a domain of scientific research, and the layman had better park his lightning stabs of intuition at the door, otherwise he is apt to upset everything all around. Perhaps Weininger might have really turned out to be a genius had he lived and kept his neurosis from the dark borderline of madness.

But these are incidental points, and it is the question of the relation of abnormality and

genius that makes Dr. Abrahamsen's book an interesting document. Unfortunately, he only raises the problem, adduces material from Weininger's life, cites a few parallels from the history of culture, but does not attempt any fresh approach toward an analytic solution. The kinship between neurosis and genius seems to hold mainly for artists rather than scientists, and I think it holds for Weininger, too, mainly in relation to the literary and metaphorical impulse that he released in his writings. In fact, some of the more imaginative fragments quoted from Weininger suggest some further conclusions on the subject that Abrahamsen himself does not draw.

In his last days Weininger went in for a study of universal symbolism, and he writes: "The thought came to me (in the spring of 1902) that there must be a relationship between the deep ocean and crime, and I believe I can maintain the same idea today. The depths of the ocean have no share in light, the greatest symbol of the highest life; any being that chooses to live there must be criminal, afraid of light. An octopus, when it is symbolic, can be seen only as a symbol of evil." Abrahamsen comments, "*This sort of symbolism is characteristic of archaic thinking. The symbol, unconsciously adopted, is a manifestation of regression to an earlier stage of thinking.*" It is obvious that this kind of symbolic thinking has a great deal in common with certain kinds of poetic metaphor, and the poet living intensely among his metaphors may very well be indulging in a form of "archaic thinking." And the more completely the poet projects the world under the forms of this archaic thinking, the less capable he becomes of coping with reality in its ordinary and practical dimension. This may be one clue to the neurosis so widespread among some of the greatest of modern writers.

As a Jew, Weininger suffered a great deal from his Judaism. He sought to escape it by becoming converted to Christianity, but he seems to have suffered more guilt at his conversion—a guilt which drove him more and more to persistent and deranged abuse of Judaism. Weininger would seem thus to provide another instance for the current discussion of the self-hatred of the Jew, but I doubt whether his case in this respect is very relevant to the general phenomenon (if there be such) of Jewish self-hatred: Weininger's hatred of himself as Jew is simply an instance of his individual

abnormality, the frustrated libido turned inward and transformed into hate. Freud was probably right when he said that Weininger's hysterical anti-Semitism was a result of his castration complex. Certainly, Weininger's writings evidence a continuous fear for his own masculinity. Abrahamsen remarks on this similarity in the conduct of Jonathan Swift, Heinrich von Kleist, the great German dramatist, and Weininger: "It is generally agreed that both Swift and Kleist had small, inadequately developed genital organs. It is possible that a similar deficiency lay behind the tragedy of Weininger, affecting his mental development."

It seems clear, then, that, given the same psychic constitution, Weininger would have turned his self-hatred against any other group, religion, or race he belonged to: Swift hated the Irish, English, and, for that matter, the human race. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to ask, as a question of general psychology, how far more or less normal Jews suffering from self-hatred are drawing psychically upon fundamentally the same sources of self-hatred as Weininger was. It seems likely that self-hatred may have a single psychological basis, though the differences of degree are tremendous.

And Weininger, of course, paid a fearful price for this hatred of the Jew. Try as he might to exorcise the spirit of Judaism from himself, every convulsion of anti-Semitic abuse was only the recoil of the instincts of destruction and sadism upon himself.

The Anglo-Saxon's Great Failure

SLAVE AND CITIZEN: THE NEGRO IN THE AMERICAS. BY FRANK TANNENBAUM.
New York, Knopf, 1947. 128 pp. \$2.00.

Reviewed by DIANA BERNSTEIN

TO MOST of us, the colonizers of the American continents are the Spanish, Dutch, French, and English. We generally overlook the Negroes, who were among the first settlers—forced, it is true—to come to these shores. So numerous were they, in fact, that we find Alexander von Humboldt, at the beginning of the 19th century, writing of a possible colored empire in the Caribbean. American civilization, both Anglo-Saxon and Latin, has been influenced in important respects by the presence of the Negro.

The social systems that grew up in areas containing large numbers of Negroes showed

important basic differences as between the Spanish and Portuguese areas and the British and American. Contrary to what we might expect—believing as we do that Britain was the fount of all liberty and that the Spanish colonial regime was as diabolical in its treatment of subject races as Las Casas depicted it to be—the Latin American system was the more flexible. Professor Tannenbaum devotes a large part of his essay to a discussion of the reasons for this apparent contradiction. It is a task for which he is peculiarly well suited, for he is one of those historians, unfortunately rare, who can see a cultural pattern and the interactions of its various elements as a whole. (This quality can be seen also in Professor Tannenbaum's earlier books, *Mexican Agrarian Revolution and Peace by Revolution*, as well as in his criminological and other sociological studies.)

When the New World was discovered, slavery had long been an accepted institution in the Iberian Peninsula—both white and Negro slaves being known. The ancient Roman slave code, which considered slavery an accident having no effect on the moral status of the individual, was adapted to the Iberian and, later, to the Latin-American scene. This code guaranteed the slave certain rights as a person which could be defended in the courts of law. Manumission, under this system, was relatively easy, being granted for certain services or upon payment of a set price. And the freedmen were easily assimilated into the community, since their former status carried with it no stigma of inferiority; many rose to high office in the state, army, or church. The Catholic Church, with its insistence upon baptism and the sanctity of the family, and its advocacy of manumission, helped increase the fluidity of the social system.

In the English-speaking countries, on the other hand, Dr. Tannenbaum points out, development was along the lines of a rigidly stratified society, in which manumission was discouraged by law, and miscegenation, though practiced, was frowned upon. The English common law, recognizing only freemen and chattels, destroyed the moral status of the slave: he was, in effect, under his master's absolute control like any other piece of property. The Protestant churches showed themselves more or less indifferent to the spiritual life of the slaves, and did not emphasize the brotherhood of man, as did the Catholics to the south; thus, they did nothing to counteract

the theory that the slave was an inferior being or to lighten his burden in any way.

Under such conditions, freedom could come only as a result of revolution. Slavery, in these areas, was a racial matter; the Negro, with whom it was identified, a physically and morally inferior being. As a result, assimilation has been a slow, painful process.

However, in spite of all seemingly absolute systems of values and prejudices, "physical proximity, slow cultural intertwining, the growth of a middle group that stands in experience and equipment between the lower and upper class, and the slow process of moral identification" will eventually break down the

walls. All obstacles notwithstanding, Professor Tannenbaum feels, society is essentially dynamic. But this little volume has a pertinence beyond this discussion of the relative fluidity of two forms of society. Its greatest value lies in a question it raises only implicitly: the importance of the moral value of man. It is upon a belief in this value that Western civilization, as we know it, is based, and it is upon the continuation of this belief that the survival of Western culture depends. In a world in which racial theories still flourish, we would do well to ponder this question. It has the deepest meaning for us, not only domestically, but for the kind of world role that America is to play.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

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JACOB GLATSTEIN, the well-known Yiddish poet, conducts a regular literary column for the *Yiddisher Kemfer*. His most recent volume is *Shtralndiker Yidn*.

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DIANA BERNSTEIN is on the staff of the Library of Jewish Information of the American Jewish Committee.

CURRENT BOOKS ON JEWISH SUBJECTS

BEHIND THE SILKEN CURTAIN: A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF ANGLO-AMERICAN DIPLOMACY IN PALESTINE. By BARTLEY C. CRUM. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1947. 297 pp. \$3.00.

By an American member of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine.

ESSAYS ON ANTI-SEMITISM. Edited by KOPPEL S. PINSON. Foreword by SALO W. BARON. New York, Conference on Jewish Relations, 1946. 169 pp. \$2.50. (Jewish Social Studies, Publications, No. 2)

Most of the essays in this second edition of a standard work have been revised and three have been added: an essay on France by Hannah Arendt, a study of German racial anti-Semitism by Waldemar Gurian, and a brief article on the postwar world by the editor.

FRANZ KAFKA: A BIOGRAPHY. By MAX BROD. Translated from the German by G. Humphreys Roberts. New York, Schocken Books, 1947. 236 pp. \$3.00.

The American edition of the life of the European novelist.

NAZI GERMANY'S WAR AGAINST THE JEWS. By SEYMOUR KRIEGER. With a foreword by Henry Monsky. New York, American Jewish Conference, 1947. 618 pp. \$5.00.

THE NEW JEWISH COOK BOOK OF FAVORITE RECIPES. By BETTY DEAN. New York, Hebrew Publishing Company, 1947. 377 pp. \$3.00.

PALESTINE: STAR OR CRESCENT. By NEVILL BARBOUR. New York, Odyssey Press, 1947. 310 pp. \$3.00.

A British viewpoint.

PALESTINE MISSION: A PERSONAL RECORD. By RICHARD H. S. CROSSMAN. New York, Harper, 1947. 210 pp. \$2.75.

By a British member of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine.

PALESTINE. By NORMAN BENTWICH. London, Benn, 1947. 302 p. 12s. 6d. (Modern world series)

A new edition.